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The Politics of Community in Shakespeare's Comic Commonwealths

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where stated otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own.

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Abstract

This thesis explores the politics of community in five Shakespearean comedies: *The Comedy of Errors* (1594), *The Merchant of Venice* (1596-8), *Measure for Measure* (1603-4), *The Tempest* (1611) and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (1613). The idea of community addresses many issues usually thought to belong to 'high politics'. Thinking about this topic therefore enables us to articulate a notion of the political firmly grounded within the functioning of the commonwealth at a local level and as a state of interpersonal relations. This thesis has three key aims. Firstly, it argues that the plays highlight the responsibility of all community members, no matter their gender or status, in shaping and contributing to their political environment by displaying civic virtue, working to obtain justice and influencing their ruler's behaviour. By so doing, it focuses on the processes of civic engagement and the political implications of everyday life within a community which have often been neglected in readings of Shakespeare's work thus far. Secondly, this thesis illustrates the inseparability of ethics and politics. It demonstrates throughout that relationships between individuals within a community can have wide-reaching implications, whether that be in terms of the existence of trust between friends, family members or fellow citizens; the importance of consent existing between subjects and ruler; or the ability of fellow-feeling to confer a sense of agency upon subjects. Lastly, it contends that Shakespeare's assessment of the commonwealth in his comedies, with its emphasis on civic values and on the relationship between the community and the individual, remains attuned to Aristotelian and Ciceronian thought, in contrast to the Tacitean influences critics have detected in the darkness and scepticism of his tragedies and histories. Shakespeare's comedies therefore question the commonly accepted paradigm in early modern intellectual history that Tacitus'

prominence increased greatly in the intellectual climate of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, while Aristotle's and Cicero's diminished. Moving away from the predominant focus on the tragedies and histories in analyses of Shakespeare's political thought, this thesis foregrounds the significance of citizenship, the household and friendship and reassesses the role of the comedies in Shakespeare's thinking about politics.

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Contents

Notes on References, Transcriptions and Translations

Unless otherwise stated, all references to the works of Shakespeare in this thesis are taken from *The Norton Shakespeare Complete Works,* Third Edition eds. Stephen Greenblatt et al. (London and New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2016).

In citing sixteenth and seventeenth century texts, I have usually referred to a contemporary edition rather than a modern edition, often accessed via *Early English Books Online*. For these texts, I have used signature references rather than folio references. In the Works Cited, the place of publication is only given if it is somewhere other than London. When citing from these texts, I have silently expanded all contractions but preserved the original spelling with the exception of u/v and i/j. In the main body of thesis, I have used shortened titles for these texts and capitalised them. In the Works Cited entries, however, I give the longer title and preserve the original capitalisation (or lack of).

I have mostly preferred to use early modern English translations of classical texts, rather than a modern translation. Unless otherwise stated, all translations directly from Latin are my own.

Introduction: Establishing the Politics of Community

In Shakespeare's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1592-94), Valentine must flee from the court of Milan to a nearby forest, after the Duke discovers that he has been planning to run away with his daughter. Once he arrives in the forest, Valentine is confronted by a group of outlaws formed of gentlemen who have also been exiled from the court. Recognising that Valentine too is a gentleman, 'beautified / with goodly shape and by your own report / a linguist' (4.1.54-56), the outlaws ask Valentine if he will 'be the captain of us all' (4.1.64). Although they threaten him with death if he does not agree to their request, Valentine negotiates the conditions of his acceptance:

> I take your offer and will live with you,
> Provided that you do no outrages
> On silly women or poor passengers. (4.1.69-71)

This negotiation in the forest between Valentine and the outlaws momentarily foregrounds and makes explicit the act of community formation, raising questions of inclusion, exclusion and common values. Valentine is only willing to be part of a community that shares his moral and ethical values, while the outlaws take an active role in deciding the composition of their community by choosing to have a leader and conceding to his demands.

This thesis argues that exploring the politics of community in Shakespeare's comedies contributes significantly to our understanding of Shakespeare's political thought. In early modern England, as the work of social historians has shown us, the community represents the functioning of the commonwealth at a local level, meaning that communities experienced and addressed many of the key issues usually thought of as belonging to 'high politics' (Collinson 1-58). Readings of Shakespeare's political thought tend to consider these issues from the ruler's point of view, due to the belief that 'the over-riding political

issue of the time was the question of sovereignty and the legitimacy of the monarch' (Hadfield, *Renaissance Politics* 1). The localised nature of the community, however, allows us to consider these key political issues from the point of view of the members of that community. Shakespeare's dramatization of his comic communities highlights that political responsibility lies with all its members, not only with rulers. As such, this thesis argues that Shakespeare's assessment of the commonwealth in his comedies, with its emphasis on civic values and on the relationship between the community and the individual, remains attuned to Aristotelian and Ciceronian thought, in contrast to the Tacitean influences critics have detected in the darkness and scepticism of his tragedies and histories.

Moreover, the fact of community as a 'set or state of interpersonal relations' (Muldrew, 'Historical Changes' 159) highlights the inseparability of politics and ethics in early modern England. This thesis demonstrates throughout that relationships between individuals within a community can have wide-reaching political implications, whether that be in terms of relationships of trust between friends, family members or fellow citizens; the importance of consent existing between subjects and ruler; or the political potential of fellow-feeling between subjects.

If *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* most clearly dramatizes the act of community formation, the plays that we will look at in this thesis explore the conflicts generated by living within a community and their resolutions, as well as the criteria for inclusion and the ways in which communities are able to govern themselves as well as be ruled by others. This thesis moves away from the dominant concern with the tragedies and histories in readings of Shakespeare's politics and advances critical discussion by foregrounding the political significance of citizenship, the household and friendship, as well as

giving greater consideration to questions of gender. This enables us to re-evaluate the role the comedies play in Shakespeare's thinking about politics and to reconsider the way in which Shakespeare contributes to early modern political discourse.

1. Comedy and Politics

Analyses of Shakespeare's tragedies and histories dominate readings of his political thought because they most clearly engage with issues which critics see as being 'traditionally political' (Leggatt, *Political Drama* ix).[1] This belief can be traced back to early theorisations of comedy that were highly influential in early modern England, namely those accounts detailed in Horace's *Ars Poetica* and in the work of fourth century grammarians, Donatus and Diomedes.[2] In his *Ars Grammatica*, Diomedes defines the genre of comedy in opposition to that of tragedy:

> The fortunes involved in comedy are those of little streets and unimportant households, not as in tragedy of princes and men of state . . . The distinctions between comedy and tragedy are these: the characters of tragedy are semi-divine, leaders of the state, kings: those of comedy are unimportant and private persons. (qtd. in and trans. Cunningham 43)

Diomedes' choice of adjectives to describe the fortunes of comedy – 'little' and 'unimportant' – make clear his belief that, in terms of their politics, the comedies are less worthy of consideration than the tragedies because rather than dealing with 'semi-divine, leaders of the state, kings', they portray only 'unimportant and private persons'. Donatus too adopts this distinction in his

[1] See also Worden 22; Hadfield, *Renaissance Politics* 35.

[2] Aristotle also outlines a theory of comedy in his *Poetics* but this did not become popular in England until the later sixteenth century (Galbraith 7).

essay 'On Comedy', when he writes that 'in comedy the fortunes of men are middle-class' (Hardison 45, qtd. in Maslen 18).

Many early modern writers and thinkers echo Diomedes' perceived hierarchy between the dramatic genres. George Puttenham, for example, in his *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589), describes the genre of comedy as 'never meddling with any Princes matters nor such high personages, but commonly of marchants, souldiers, artificers, good honest housholders, and also of unthrifty youthes, young damsels, old nurses, bawds, brokers, ruffians and parasites' (Sig.F^{v}), emphasising that comedy deals only with the general population rather than 'high personages'. Diomedes' and Puttenham's words highlight that while consideration of the tragedies and histories facilitates an emphasis on monarchical power and issues of sovereignty, the comedies refocus our attention on the individuals that make up a political community and the dynamics that shape it.

This thesis therefore articulates a view of politics firmly grounded within the processes of civic engagement and the political implications of everyday life within a community. It seeks to demonstrate that 'unimportant and private persons' contribute to the political community as much as 'leaders of state, kings' do. This thesis' view of politics correlates with a recent line of enquiry in early modern literary studies that considers the political as 'a *concept* of a particular sphere of action in which subjects exercise agency' and thinks about politics in terms of 'its capacity to organize, manage, and mediate individual and collective forms of human life' (Shortslef and Lowrance 2, original

emphasis) due to the fact that this, in many ways, describes the function of community.[3]

Shakespeare, however, departs from the descriptions of comedy outlined by Diomedes and Puttenham in a notable fashion: as well as populating his comic plays with 'marchants', 'artificers', 'housholders', 'unthrifty youthes' and 'young damsels', he also includes a Duke, or member of the nobility, in all of his comedies with the exception of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Salingar 252). Thus, the processes of civic engagement upon which this thesis focuses entail a consideration of politics not only as 'a particular sphere of action in which subjects exercise agency' but also of the interaction between subject and ruler and the effect this interaction has on the dynamics of the political community. Rather than a one way relationship in which rulers control their subjects' actions, subjects are shown to be able to influence and impact upon their rulers in crucial ways. By considering the significance of the role of every member of the community, no matter their gender or status, our view of politics in the comedies diverges from the male-dominated and elite sense of the political that has often prevailed in critical readings of Shakespeare's politics thus far.[4]

2. Shakespeare as Political Thinker

Focusing on the comedies also facilitates a reframing of the way we conceive Shakespeare as a political thinker. This thesis argues that Shakespeare pursues political ideas in his plays and contributes to political discourse not in the sustained and programmatic fashion of political tracts but through imaginary, literary and dramatic means. It therefore follows Terence Cave in viewing

[3] One of the main practitioners of this line of criticism is Julia Reinhard Lupton in both *Citizen-Saints* (2005) and *Thinking With Shakespeare* (2011).

[4] Waller discusses the male-orientated focus of new historicist and cultural materialist criticism (18-22), while Arnold highlights the elitist nature of most readings of Shakespeare's politics due to their focus on the monarchy (24-5). See also Lake who argues that readings of Shakespeare's politics are 'a peculiarly monarchical and aristocratic affair' (14).

Shakespeare as 'a paradigm of literary thoughtfulness' who elucidates themes of political import using 'the instruments of dramatic thought' (116). Alongside this, it also considers Shakespeare's political thought within the contexts of both early modern politics and classical political philosophy and recognises the importance of thinking about politics in conjunction with 'manners, morals and ethics' (Alvis and West 8).

Although drama cannot perform a sustained exposition of political ideas in the same way that prose texts can, its specifically dramatic qualities offer many advantages in dealing with political ideas over political tracts (Lake 16). Perhaps the most obvious of these advantages is that drama possesses an ability to illustrate an alternative form of living by bringing it to life on the stage. Phil Withington's analysis of citizenship in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, in his chapter 'Putting the City into Shakespeare's City Comedy', provides a case in point. He reveals how Shakespeare transfers the traditionally male civic values of *honestas* to the female characters in the play, creating a model of female citizenship where the women's display of civic virtue is far superior to that of their male counterparts. Whereas political tracts apply these qualities exclusively to men, Withington's discussion demonstrates that there is no reason why women cannot also enact them. In addition, given its status as the only comedy set in England, we can see *The Merry Wives* as in some ways reflecting real life in an early modern English community, thus highlighting the disparity between the prescribed and idealised values set out in political tracts and their application in real life situations. In the same way, our readings of *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Merchant of Venice* in this thesis illuminate the incongruence between household values as set out in conduct manuals and the behaviour of household members in everyday situations.

Moreover, unlike political tracts, drama is able to represent multiple points of view simultaneously, not only within the one play in the form of *in utramque partem* but also at any single moment on stage.[5] The multi-vocal nature of drama in comparison to political tracts results from dramatic techniques such as the aside or the use of characters as foils to one another.[6] The body language and gestures of characters on stage can also add another layer of complexity to the words being spoken. In some cases, significant moments in our readings of the plays turn out to be highly ambiguous. As such, drama is better able to stimulate debate in comparison to political tracts because it is open to 'a variety of often actually or potentially contradictory readings or applications' (Lake 16). András Kiséry has shown that one of the outcomes of early modern drama's versatility and its status as 'the most influential secular public medium' (1) was that it not only tapped into conversations on political matters but, more importantly, helped to feed and generate them (27). Furthermore, these conversations fuelled by drama tended to be about 'the means' rather than the 'ends' of political action (27). Shakespeare's comedies too focus on the 'means' rather than the 'ends', bringing to life the processes of community politics and in turn creating a better understanding of their outcome, both for early modern and for twenty-first century audiences.

In viewing his politics in this way, we depart from previous explorations of Shakespeare as a political thinker which have proved detrimental to the inclusion of the comedies. Scholars working in a variety of different traditions have produced a vast range of political readings of Shakespearean drama, including those working in the new historicist and cultural materialist

[5] For a discussion of Shakespeare's use of *in utramque partem* see Armitage et al. 6; Skinner's Afterword in the same volume, 271-281; and Altman.

[6] Prose texts too engage in multivocality, although unlike drama they are limited to doing so by means of dialogue. For the use and popularity of dialogue in early modern England see, for example, Cox, as well as Shrank, 'All Talk'.

traditions, as well as in the Marxist tradition. The first group of scholars, however, to consider Shakespeare explicitly as a political thinker were political theorists John Alvis, Allan Bloom, Harry Jaffa, Thomas West and others working in a school of thought influenced by political philosopher Leo Strauss. Developing ideas first sketched in Bloom and Jaffa's *Shakespeare's Politics* (1964), in their collection *Shakespeare as Political Thinker* (1981), John Alvis, Thomas West and their contributors see Shakespeare's work as conducting 'an inquiry into issues connected with political formation – an inquiry commensurate in scope with that pursued by political philosophers' (4). They therefore view his plays as systematically pursuing questions of political and philosophical significance, in dialogue with classical political philosophers, while disregarding the contemporary political context.[7] Under the influence of this approach, the comedies become a 'paradigm through which we can grasp the essential character of political virtue and in terms of which we may evaluate the fully articulated regimes embodied in the non-comic plays' because 'the comic societies resemble the paradigms of the best city worked out discursively in such works of political philosophy as Plato's *Republic*, More's *Utopia*, John of Salisbury's *Policraticus'* (19). Alvis and West recognise the political significance inherent within the comedies at the same time as undermining it. The theories of political philosophy that can be detected in the comedies are only significant for what they can tell us about 'the fully articulated regimes embodied in the non-comic plays', suggesting that the comedies do not philosophise at a sustained enough level for Alvis' and West's purposes. As a result, although the collection features more essays on the

[7] David Lowenthal who also works within the Straussian school states in *Shakespeare and the Good Life: Politics and Ethics in Dramatic Form* (1997) that his analysis disregards the contemporary political context because he 'does not view Shakespeare as a product of the Elizabethan period' (ix). For more recent work following in the Straussian tradition see Alulis and Sullivan; Murley and Dutton.

comedies than much subsequent work on Shakespeare as a political thinker, they are considered primarily in terms of their perceived overlap with the qualities of tragedy rather than based on their own merits as comedies. Harry V. Jaffa, for example, implies that *Measure for Measure* is a political play because it 'seems to offer no possibility of a non-tragic solution' (212) while Paul A. Cantor writes in his chapter on *The Tempest* that 'the dramatic material' out of which the play is built 'is not far removed from the familiar ground of Shakespearean tragedy' (242).

Subsequent interpretations of Shakespeare's politics move away from the idea of Shakespeare as political philosopher and instead are concerned with the way in which Shakespeare's work 'is informed by contemporary political ideas, events and debates' (Hadfield, *Renaissance Politics* 12). Yet this approach also often excludes the comedies from consideration based on the contemporary debates critics choose to examine. Andrew Hadfield and Robin Headlam Wells, for example, both explore the contemporary political context in great detail but their focus on themes such as the just ruler, forms of government, rebellion and providence inevitably entails the conclusion that the tragedies and histories possess a more 'obvious political topicality and resonance' (Hadfield, *Renaissance Politics* 35) than the comedies.

More recently, the editors and contributors of *Shakespeare and Early Modern Political Thought* (2009) have also sought to 'situate Shakespeare's works within the landscape of early modern political thought' but, more than this, they desire to apply 'the findings of intellectual history' (1) to Shakespeare's work and to treat him 'systematically as a participant in the political thought of his time' (2). One of the key insights provided by their

approach is that 'Shakespeare's dramatization of political debate can deepen our understanding of the texture of early modern political thought' (6). The editors themselves, however, also highlight that one of the difficulties of their 'contextualising history' approach is that, when 'we examine a work of political theory contextually we aim to draw from its contexts an understanding of the particular author's views on monarchy, resistance, tolerance, rights, duties, reason of state or any number of questions central to political theory' which in turn results in the creation of doctrines attributed to that particular author. Plays and poems, however, 'evoke doctrines or what might become doctrines, but do not necessarily use them doctrinally'. As such, the editors note that reading Shakespeare's work historically 'requires recognising that there is more to political thought than a history of doctrines, yet it is as an account of doctrines that the history of political thought is still largely studied' (21). As well as gesturing towards the different ways in which literary genres such as drama and poetry allow us to widen our understanding of what constitutes political thought, Armitage et al. also indicate that their approach to Shakespeare's plays based on political theory will attempt to read them doctrinally, at least in some sense. Of all the plays, the comedies are the ones which are least able to read in such a manner because they engage least with 'the questions central to political theory'. Moreover, as part of their attempt to treat Shakespeare 'systematically' as a political thinker, the editors and some of the contributors to *Shakespeare and Early Modern Political Thought* view him as adopting a Tacitean mode of politics which, as we will discuss further below, also acts to exclude the comedies from consideration.

In contrast, analysing Shakespeare's politics via the means of dramatic techniques facilitates an emphasis on the significant ways the comedies in particular can contribute to our understanding of early modern politics. Elizabethan anti-theatricalists singled comedy out from all other dramatic genres as one which was particularly likely to cause unease and upset due to its political resonances.[8] Laughter, for a start, was recognised 'as a powerful political tool' (Maslen 21). While defendants of the comic genre argue that comedy educated its audience by ridiculing characters with vices, its attackers claimed that what they described as its base and vulgar subject matter only encouraged base and vulgar behaviour (Maslen 12). In making these complaints against comedy, Elizabethan writers are acknowledging that comedy in particular had the potential to affect its audience's behaviour because they could most easily identify with what they were seeing on stage. That is not to say that all comedies acted as 'a mirror of a man's life' (Sig.Fvii^{r}), as Thomas Elyot declares in *The Boke Named Governour* (1537). Shakespeare's comedies, for example, deny this definition by their almost exclusive use of foreign and fantastic settings. By virtue of these settings, however, and the fact that they are set in the present, unlike the histories and many of the tragedies, the comedies are particularly able to bring alternative forms of living to life on the stage because they are

[8] Stephen Gosson, for example, in *The School of Abuse* (1579) indicates that the comedies are the main focus of his invective when he writes 'if any man aske me why my selfe have penned Comedyes in time paste, and inveigh so egerly against them here, let him knowe that . . . I have sinned, and am sorry for my fault: hee runnes farre that never turns, better late than never' (Sig.C7^{r}, qtd. in Maslen 10).

more likely to be viewed by the audience as providing an alternate reality, occurring in the present but in a different place.[9]

Moreover, this thesis explores a politics of community in particular because the idea of community is embedded in comedy's dramatic form. Both Camille Wells Slights and Ian Ward have investigated the idea of community in Shakespeare's comedies. In *Shakespeare's Comic Commonwealths* (1993), Slights seeks to rectify 'the relative neglect of the social dimensions of the comedies', in comparison to the focus on their romantic aspects, and states that her aim is 'to explore how the ten comedies from *The Comedy of Errors* through *Twelfth Night* represent the problems and satisfactions of people living together in an ordered commonwealth' (4). Meanwhile, in his article on 'Shakespeare's Politics of Community' (1999), Ward investigates the power of literature as a supplement to legal thinking and its ability to instigate a narrative of community using the example of *Love's Labour's Lost*. By focusing on the social and narratological aspects of community in particular, however, neither have fully elucidated its value as a unique tool for exploring the politics of the comedies.

A consideration of community goes hand in hand with the genre of comedy because, as a genre, comedy is concerned both at a structural and thematic level with the development of the communal as well as the individual (Frye 73-8). That is to say, Shakespearean comedy typically dramatizes the forces that bring communities together and those that break them apart. In each play this thesis explores, communities are founded on particular values, be they religious, ethical, moral, social or otherwise. As Alexandra Shepard and Phil

[9] In these terms we can view the theatrical space of the comedies as an example of what Foucault calls the heterotopia. See Foucault. For the theatre in general as a heterotopian space, see J. Dolan.

Withington remind us, 'community, as a state of interpersonal relations, did not preclude conflict. On the contrary, conflict was intrinsic to such relations, and the precepts and practices of community were invariably crystallised through attempts to resolve or contain it' (5). The comedies therefore act as sites of experimentation for the values on which the communities are founded and, by testing them out and bringing them into conflict with one another, either expose or assert these values. This gives us a better understanding of what constitutes an early modern community and provides a natural focus through which political ideas can be explored, rooted in the dramatic and specifically comic form of the plays.

3. Community and Comedy as a Dramatic Form

This thesis will focus on five Shakespearean comedies: *The Comedy of Errors* (1594), *The Merchant of Venice* (1596-8), *Measure for Measure* (1603-4), *The Tempest* (1611) and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (1613). These five plays in particular have been chosen both because they interrogate the idea and ideal of community and because together they span Shakespeare's comic trajectory. Critics have often been reluctant to view the body of plays described as comedies in the first folio as a coherent whole. This reluctance is reflected in the fact that terms such as 'festive comedies', 'problem plays' or 'romances' are ones that have later been invented by critics to help make further generic distinctions. While the festive comedies are seen to conform to a Saturnalian pattern of clarification and release (Barber) or a retreat into the green world (Frye 182), one of the main reasons for viewing the problem plays as problematic is because they are much darker in tone and do not fit in with these patterns. Meanwhile, critics most often situate the romances in terms of their relationship with the tragedies, rather than the comedies, reflected in the fact that they are also known as tragi-comedies (Jordan, *Monarchies* 12;

Felperin). The belief in the romances as a continuation of the tragedies stems not only from their chronology and thematic similarities but, as Emma Smith writes, from the fact that 'the tragedies are the teleological focus of most critics' attention' (26), as we have witnessed in the example of Alvis and West, discussed above.

As a result of these perceived differences in subgenres, studies devoted to Shakespeare's comedies often concentrate solely on the first ten plays that Shakespeare wrote and exclude the problem plays and the romances.[10] Camille Wells Slights' *Shakespeare's Comic Commonwealths* (1993) and Kiernan Ryan's *Shakespeare's Comedies* (2009) are only two examples of a much wider trend.[11] This thesis aims to challenge the tendency to divide Shakespeare's comedies into subgenres, instead contending that all are engaged in the exploration of a politics of community, including the collaborative play *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. While the plays described as romances and problem plays undeniably represent a shift in tone from the earlier comedies, their action, as we will see, is nevertheless equally motivated by conflict within the community and the subsequent restoration of harmony. Moreover, they are as concerned as the rest of the comedies with the role of subjects within a community and often place particular emphasis on the importance of

[10] The exact order in which these first ten plays were written is still disputed. Both Ryan and Slights place *The Comedy of Errors* before *The Taming of the Shrew* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* while the Norton Shakespeare features the inverse order: *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Taming of the Shrew* then *The Comedy of Errors*.

[11] Further examples are Leggatt *Shakespeare's Comedy of Love;* Waller ed. *Shakespeare's Comedies;* Richard Dutton and Jean E. Howard eds. *A Companion to Shakespeare's Work: The Comedies* (2003). Dutton and Howards' volume considers only the first ten comedies, with the 'problem plays' and the 'late plays' being considered in a later volume, alongside the poems. In *Shakespeare and Comedy* (2005), Rob Maslen considers the comedies up until 1603 and therefore does not include the late plays (although he discusses *Measure for Measure* in an afterword).

household relations as well as the political implications of interpersonal relations more generally.

Each of the chapters that follow explores a specific play (or two plays in the case of the last chapter) and the model of community depicted therein. Although structured with the plays in chronological order, this thesis does not intend to make a teleological argument about Shakespeare's politics of community. With its allegiance to the classical unities and employment of motifs such as the shipwreck and journeying, *The Tempest* harks back to *The Comedy of Errors* while *The Two Noble Kinsmen*'s exploration of the conflict between friendship and love, for example, contains several echoes of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *The Merchant of Venice*. We can therefore see Shakespeare's thinking about a politics of community as circular rather than linear as he returns to and reconsiders ideas that have concerned him throughout his career.

4. The Politics of Early Modern Communities

One of the key ways in which this thesis defines community is in terms of its relationship with the commonwealth. The work of social and intellectual historians has brought into focus the political significance of community as the functioning of the commonwealth at a local level. In '*De Republica Anglorum*: Or, History with the Politics Put Back', Patrick Collinson makes clear the relationship between community and the commonwealth when he divides early modern society into three different levels which he describes as: 'definable hierarchically as bottom, middle and top, or spatially as local community, county community and commonwealth, or community of the realm' (16). These communities, as Collinson further explains, were 'overlapping, superimposed communities which were also called semi-autonomous, self-governing political cultures. These may be called, but

always in quotes, "republics": village republics; in the counties, gentry republics; and at a transcendent level the commonwealth of England, which Sir Thomas Smith thought it proper to render in Latin as *Republica Anglorum*' (16). In other words, the community was a form of the commonwealth whereby many people were able and encouraged to partake in the offices of government of their local counties.

This phenomenon of self-governing local communities became so widespread in Elizabethan England that Collinson refers to the country as a whole as 'the monarchical republic of Queen Elizabeth I' (32), indicating that national and local administration worked together to govern the country. The rise of local office-holding under Elizabeth can be attributed to the vast increase in court and royal power which paradoxically gave rise to a greater number of tasks and level of responsibility being delegated to local administrations (Collinson 13). Building on Collinson's work, Mark Goldie argues that 'large numbers of people undertook the self-management of their local communities' (154) and identifies 'four historiographical models of participation, which we may call the judicial, the dramaturgical, the associational and the psephological', before adding local office-holding as a fifth model of participation (155). Goldie argues that not only did 'an extraordinary number of early modern people' (161) hold office but also that the practice of office-holding was 'remarkably socially extensive', with office holders in parishes ranging from gentry to cottagers (163). As a result, 'governance was not something done on high to the passive recipients of authority, but something actively engaged in by the lesser agents of government; and every citizen was in some measurement a lesser agent of government' (155). More recently, Conal Condren argues that the discourse of office-holding in early modern England was even more pervasive than previously realised. There exists not only governmental offices

but also 'social offices' (11) which include roles relating to the church and to the household. Condren thus extends the range of office-holding to include a much wider range of the population.[12]

The process of urban incorporation also granted power to citizens which in turn meant that 'freemen, citizens and burgesses' were able to 'personify qualities of civility and governance' (Withington, *Politics* 12). The basic structure of incorporated communities can be explained as follows:

> First it consisted of a core of civic structures – such as aldermanic benches, common councils, parishes and guilds – through which and by which freemen were governed and represented. Second, it encompassed the jurisdictions and neighbourhoods in which members of enfranchised households lived. Third, households constituted it: those places in which the primary affective and economic relationships of a person were likely to be based. (Withington, *Politics* 10)

As well as the 'civic structures' of aldermanic benches, common councils, parishes and guilds which offered manifold opportunities for citizens to be involved in local government, Withington's definition also makes clear the significance of the household to these incorporated communities. He later expands on this importance when he explains that 'the household commonwealth was at once a political entity in its own right and analogous to political practices more generally' (198). The political significance of the household therefore offered opportunities for women and children, among others, to be drawn into the civic nexus.

A further important example of a corporate community, noted by Henry S. Turner, is the theatre itself. Although theatres were never officially

[12] See also David Rollinson, *A Commonwealth*. Rollinson attributes a key role to the commonalty in the formation of an integrated political community in England, a process that he views as a 'long social revolution' occurring between 1066 and 1649.

incorporated due to 'antitheatrical sentiment and civic policies' (193), they nevertheless functioned in essence as a corporate community, providing playing companies with 'a place of commerce and assembly that could become the equivalent of their guild hall under the protection of the monarch' (194). As Turner shows in his reading of Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1599), the theatre was therefore an appropriate place on which to meditate on the form and impact of the corporate community.

Alongside its relationship to the commonwealth, the other aspect of community stressed throughout this thesis is its status as a 'set or state of interpersonal relations' (Muldrew, 'Historical Community' 159). Craig Muldrew writes that historians' desire to view community as opposing individualism means that 'the communal nature of the self has all but been ignored' ('Historical Community' 158). He continues to argue that rather than viewing community and individualism as opposing one another, we must consider community as a 'set of overlapping social relations' which are 'interpreted, communicated and mediated between individuals' ('Historical Community' 159). Certainly early modern definitions of community emphasise the interpersonal aspect. From John Bullokar's *An English Expositor* (1616) onwards, community is most frequently defined as 'a fellowship in partaking together' (Sig.D8^{v}). Henry Cockeram in his *English Dictionary* (1623) defines community in the exact same way as Bullokar (Sig.C5^{r}), while Thomas Blount in his *Glossographia or a Dictionary* (1656) further develops the definition to 'a participation, fellowship, or society; good correspondency, neer familiarity one with another; a Corporation or Company incorporate' (Sig.K5^{r}). The emphasis on 'partaking' and 'participation' in these definitions highlights the importance of interpersonal relationships to the idea of community. In other words, the early modern English viewed the communities of which they

were a part in terms of the associative relationships with others and their own role in that 'fellowship'. As Shepard and Withington point out, phrases such as 'good correspondency' and 'neer familiarity' highlight that these relations are emotional and personal rather than institutional (11).

In their introduction to *Shakespeare and Early Modern Political Thought*, Armitage et al. accentuate the importance of personal relationships for the commonwealth as opposed to institutional ones when they write that:

> From the early modern perspective, it was the character and spirit of those making up the polity that was crucial to its political health. In relative contrast, modern political analysis has put more stress on the institutional and constitutional arrangements of politics. In this sense, early modern politics was particularly personal, whatever its constitutional form. (4)

By describing politics as 'particularly personal', Armitage et al. emphasise the ethical side of politics. The personal relationship on which the collection as a whole focuses is that of a king and his counsellor. Exploring the politics of community in Shakespeare's comedies, however, stresses that the behaviour and virtue of any individual member of the community, counsellor or not, had the potential to impact greatly upon the political health of the commonwealth.

As this overview shows, the politics of community are closely integrated with, and dependent upon, early modern ideas of the commonwealth, citizenship and the household. To think further therefore about the politics of community, we must consider these concepts in more detail.

5. The Early Modern Commonwealth

The question of the best state of the commonwealth was one of the fundamental concerns of early modern political thought (Nelson 253) and, as such, '"commonwealth" was a key word of unusual importance in the early

modern period' (Knights et al. 660). Defining commonwealth is no easy matter as it was employed in a variety of ways across a broad spectrum, and closely related to cognates such as 'the common good', 'common weal' and 'the common interest' as well as classical terms such as *res publica* (Knights et al. 661).[13] Most broadly speaking, commonwealth referred to the form of political order most favourable to the realisation of the common good. One of the most well-known early modern definitions of commonwealth is that given by Sir Thomas Smith in *De Republica Anglorum* (1583) as 'a society or common doing of a multitude of free men collected together and united by common accord & covenauntes among themselves, for the conservation of themselves aswell in peace as in warre' (Sig.Ci^{r}).

Smith's definition raises many questions to which we will return throughout this thesis. Firstly, his passive phrasing of free men 'collected together' raises the question of agency: were citizens and subjects of the commonwealth required to actively form a community or was this done for them? Related to this is the issue of whether or not citizens and subjects would be expected to participate in the community and to what extent. Secondly, Smith notes that the 'multitude of free men' should be 'united by common accord', thereby highlighting the idea of consent and its necessity to the formation of community. Thirdly, the mention of 'covenauntes' in relation to the uniting of the commonwealth raises the matter of the role of law within a community. Finally, the purpose Smith cites of the community – 'for the conservation of themselves' – calls our attention to the question of inclusion and exclusion: we do not know whether 'themselves' refers to everyone or only a chosen few.

[13] See also Rollinson, 'Shakespeare's Commonwealth' for a history of the term from the thirteenth century onwards and a discussion of the ways in which Shakespeare employs the word in his plays.

Early modern people derived many of their ideas about the commonwealth from the *studia humanitatis*, the study of classical texts, particularly regarding the subjects of rhetoric, poetry, history, grammar and philosophy. This thesis will contend that Shakespeare's conceptions of the commonwealth and of citizenship in his comedies are influenced by the work of Cicero and Aristotle. In making this claim, this thesis questions the commonly accepted paradigm in early modern intellectual history that Tacitus' prominence increased greatly in the intellectual climate of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, while Aristotle's and Cicero's diminished.[14] Montaigne, in his *Essais*, summarises one of the key reasons for this transition from the 'old humanism' of Cicero to the 'new humanism' of Tacitus when he says that Tacitus' attitude towards politics 'is more proper to a crazed troubled state, as is ours at this present' (Sig.Bbb^{r}). While Aristotle and Cicero are principally concerned with the relationship between the individual and civil society and establish their conception of politics in relation to the ethical, Tacitus, as a historian of the Principate, displays a far more cynical view of the political and a 'fascination with the corrupting influences of power and money' (A. M. Gowing 22). Rather than viewing rulers as being motivated by virtue or the common good, Tacitus sees them as being driven by self-interest, greed and ambition. A Tacitean view of the world, as Montaigne indicates, resonated deeply with writers who increasingly viewed the early modern English court as full of corruption and deceit, particularly under James I's rule (Smuts 108). Apologists for absolute monarchy, however, also employed the writings of

[14] See Tuck who charts the change from the 'old humanism' of Cicero and Aristotle to the 'new humanism' of Tacitus and Seneca and its spread throughout Europe, 31-119. He also investigates the anti-Tacitean responses to this 'new humanism' by advocates of the old, 120-153. See also J. H. Salmon 'Cicero' and 'Seneca'; Skinner *Foundations* and Dzelzainis who concludes that Shakespeare 'was working to the agenda of the new humanism in the 1590s' (114).

Tacitus. Alexandra Gajda explains that 'Tacitus' account of Rome's bloody civil wars in the Histories, and the methods used by Augustus and Tiberius to create and sustain the Principate in the Annals, were pressed into demonstrations of the ways that a state – almost always a monarchical state – must establish strong, stable rule over subjects' (259).[15] Tacitean thought therefore influenced a variety of writers across the political spectrum. Henry Savile's translation of *Agricola* and the *Histories* into English in 1591 was the start of a flood of commentaries and translations produced in England of Tacitus' work (Gajda 266), aiding and reflecting its mounting popularity.

Given its dark and sceptical nature, a Tacitean conception of the political lends itself in particular to the genre of tragedy, reflected in the number of early modern tragedies that based their plot on events described by Tacitus in his *Annals*.[16] The editors of *Shakespeare and Early Modern Political Thought* view Shakespeare's work as participating in this Tacitean mode when they write that 'at his darkest, Shakespeare shows what happens when human failing is combined with a Senecan, Tacitean or even Augustinian view of the world, a world in which vice is unavoidable' (Armitage et al. 19). Although they do not specify to which genre they are referring, the fact that they mention 'human failing' implies that the editors are writing with the tragedies and histories in mind. In contrast, Shakespeare's comedies, this thesis will argue, remains much more attuned to the civic values of Aristotelian and Ciceronian thought, given comedy's emphasis on the communal rather than the individual and its emphasis on citizenship and civic society.

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[15] See also Hadfield, *Renaissance Politics* 29.

[16] These include Ben Jonson's *Sejanus* (1603), the anonymous *Tragedy of Tiberius* (1607) and *Tragedy of Nero* (1624), Thomas May's *Julia Agrippina, Empress of Rome* (1628) and Nathanael Richards' *Tragedy of Messallina the Roman Empress* (1634-36). For a detailed discussion of the *Annales* as a source for Stuart drama see Bradford, especially from 135.

Moreover, this thesis also argues for the continuity of Shakespeare's political thinking across the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras. The end of Elizabeth I's reign and the beginning of James I and VI's was a significant impetus for perceived shifts in early modern political discourse. As Andrew Hadfield writes, 'James I's accession transformed the political agenda: certain approaches and burning issues were put to one side or disappeared altogether, and others came to the fore and assumed a vital new importance' (*Renaissance Politics* 182). As the 'poet-king', James himself contributed to the public perception of the changing political agenda through the publication of his works such as *Basilikon Doron* (1599) and *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies* (1598), both of which he reissued upon taking the English throne and which were widely circulated (Sharpe, *Image Wars* 23).[17] Noticeably, James often employs the language of commonwealth in these tracts but he does so in a very different way to Shakespeare. He continually publicises himself as the head and 'father' of the English commonwealth as, for example, in *The Trew Law* when he says that in the coronation oath kings promise to 'maintaine concord, wealth and civilitie' among their people 'as a loving Father, and careful watchman, caring for them more then for himselfe, knowing himselfe to be ordained for them, and they not for him; and therefore countable to that great God, who placed him as his lieutenant over them' (75).[18] By taking a paternalist viewpoint, James reduces the image of the commonwealth to a relationship between

[17] *Basilikon Doron* was first published in Scots in 1598. Seven printed copies of an anglicised version were then published in 1599 before James I licensed the publication of the English version of the book in 1603 along with *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies* (Sharpe, *Image Wars* 18, 21).

[18] All quotations from the writings of James VI and I in this thesis are taken from Sommerville, ed. *King James VI and I: Political Writings.*

father and children, depriving the people of any sense of agency and responsibility 'for the conservation of themselves' (T. Smith Sig.Ci^{r}).[19]

The Jacobean era also brought with it important changes in theatrical and dramaturgical practice, including the rise of the private theatre and the increasing popularity of the masque, to name only some of the most prominent. In Chapter Four, we will consider some of the implications of *The Tempest*'s and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*'s staging in Blackfriars. In Chapter Three, we will examine the theme of consent in *Measure for Measure* in the context of James' attempt to gain the Parliament's consent for the Union. Without denying the significance of the Jacobean political and theatrical context, therefore, this thesis does not view James I's accession as a pivotal moment in transforming Shakespeare's political outlook in his comedies. In comparison to the tragedies and histories, in which we are more likely to detect the impact of James I's appointment to the English throne, the comedies are less directly concerned with issues of sovereignty and succession and, as discussed above, less receptive to the Tacitean view of politics that increased in popularity during James' reign. Instead, in his comedies, Shakespeare continues to use the language of commonwealth in its Aristotelian and Ciceronian senses to emphasise the relationship between individuals and their community rather than in the paternalistic sense in which James I employs it.

5.1 Shakespeare's Commonwealth, the Aristotelian Polis and the Household

Two aspects of the Aristotelian *polis*, the role of the household and the need for active participation, most clearly influence the view of the commonwealth that Shakespeare presents in his comedies. Aristotle's most influential works on early modern thought were his *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*. Kevin

[19] For an exploration of paternalist theory in early modern England, see Brewer and Schochet.

Sharpe emphasises the ubiquity of Aristotelian thought in the period when he writes that 'it was essential to claim biblical endorsement for almost any action in early modern England, and the same was almost as true for Aristotle' (*Remapping* 76).[20] In the opening lines of the *Politics*, Aristotle sets out his view of the political community when he claims that:

> We see that every city-state is a community of some sort, and that every community is established for the sake of some good (for everyone performs every action for the sake of what he takes to be good). Clearly, then, while every community aims at some good, the community that has the most authority of all and encompasses all the others aims highest, that is to say, at the good that has the most authority of all. This community is the one called a city-state, the community that is political. (1.1.1252a1-7 1)[21]

In other words, it is only through living together in the commonwealth that 'the highest good' of the virtue and happiness of all citizens living within the community can be achieved. As Aristotle continues to describe his view of the *polis* in the *Politics*, he explains the vital role played by households and villages and their contribution to the state of the commonwealth. He devotes most of the first book of the *Politics* to a discussion of household composition and management and names three different relationships whose functioning is integral to household dynamics: that of 'master and slave, husband and wife, father and children' (4). In concluding his discussion, he notes the necessity to think about each of these relationships and their connection to the 'constitution'

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[20] Charles Schmitt helps to evidence this claim when he describes the 'two-century-long effort of translating and retranslating' of Aristotle's works that took place between 1400 and 1600 which 'gave rise to a remarkable range of new Latin versions of Aristotle far in excess of anything that had been produced earlier' (65). He gives further weight to Aristotle's importance when he estimates that 'between three and four thousand editions of *Aristotelica* were published between the invention of printing and the year 1600' in comparison to less than five hundred editions of Plato (14).

[21] All quotations from Aristotle's *Politics* in this thesis are taken from Aristotle, *The Politics* trans. C. D. C. Reeve.

in detail, due to the fact that 'every household is part of a state, and these persons are part of the household; and the virtue of the part ought to be examined in relation to that of the whole' (20). As well as highlighting the role of the household within the commonwealth, Aristotle consistently emphasises that the success of the commonwealth requires the participation of all members, whether they be citizens, officials, wives or slaves.

Many early modern writers and thinkers widely embraced Aristotle's conception of the significance of the household in the community. Commonly referred to as 'a little commonwealth', the household was one of the main constitutive units of every community and was afforded a key role in early modern political ideology.[22] Sir Thomas Smith, for example, writes in his *De Republica Anglorum* that the family was the 'first and most natural beginning and source of cities, towns, nations, kingdoms, and of all civil societies' (Sig.Ciii^{r}). In fact, early modern writers follow Aristotle's idea of the household's significance to its logical conclusion and strongly emphasise that civic behaviour is instilled in the home. In the words of William Gouge in *Of Domesticall Duties* (1622), the household was the 'school wherein the first principles and grounds of government and subjection are learned' (Sig.C2^{v}). This conception of the household created an accessible way for all household members to contribute to the common good and actively participate in their communities.

In his comedies, Shakespeare too demonstrates the importance of the household. In recent years, there have been several studies of the role of the household and domesticity in early modern drama, with a particular focus on

[22] See Amussen and Orlin for detailed discussions of the relationship between the private sphere of the household and the public sphere of the commonwealth.

domestic tragedies and the materiality of the stage.[23] Much less attention, however, has been given to the relationship between the household and the commonwealth in early modern comedies, including Shakespeare's.[24] The first two chapters of this thesis in particular, on *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Merchant of Venice,* are concerned with the relationship between the household and the marketplace and the consequences of this relationship for the community. Chapter One shows us a model of community that is based on trust, credit and household relations. Drawing on Craig Muldrew's *The Economy of Obligation,* which charts the rise in the use and significance of social and economic credit in early modern England, it seeks to show the ways in which a social ethic of trust lay at the heart of early modern society and investigates the importance of trust in several different contexts related to the play: the household, the mercantile guild, the theatre and the Inns of Court. Turning towards *The Comedy of Errors* itself, the chapter explores the connections posited in the play between trust, credit and citizenship and the relationship between the household and the wider community. To do so, it considers the play's relationship to contemporary texts, such as household and conduct manuals, as well as with Plautus's *Menaechmi*, one of its key source texts. Ultimately, the Ephesian community of *The Comedy of Errors* shows us that domestic concerns are integrally intertwined with civic concerns: one cannot be a good citizen without first being a good householder.

Chapter Two reveals the consequences for this model of community when household relations break down. In *The Merchant of Venice*, the Venetian

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[23] See Comensoli, F. Dolan *Dangerous Familiars,* Korda *Domestic Economies*, Richardson and Wall.

[24] Scholars who have explored this connection include Lorna Hutson in *The Usurer's Daughter*, Mario DiGangi in a chapter called 'The Social Relations of Shakespeare's Comic Households', as well as Jessica Slights in her unpublished PhD thesis 'The Moral Architecture of the Household in Shakespeare's Comedies'.

community is founded upon principles of mercantilism rather than upon household values. As a result, the Venetian mercantile community is one which prizes a willingness to hazard and venture in order to bring money in to the Venetian economy rather than the value of thriftiness prized in the environ of the household. The chapter discusses the willingness to hazard in relation to the precepts of early modern merchant manuals and other early modern plays in which it forms a prominent theme. In particular *The Merchant of Venice* raises questions of who should and should not belong to a community. Shylock is excluded from the Venetian community of mercantilism due to his beliefs on usury yet paradoxically he is also shown to be integral to the Christian culture of honour on which the community is predicated. A community founded on the principles of mercantilism is therefore an unstable one precisely because it cannot survive without the help of those it excludes.

Thus the relationship between the household and the commonwealth forms a key foundation of Shakespeare's exploration of community, as does the concept of active participation. Shakespeare further interrogates the necessity for, and scope of, active participation from all community members through his examination of citizenship and civic virtue.

5.2 Shakespearean Citizenship and Ciceronian Virtue

If the work of Aristotle is influential in determining Shakespeare's view of the commonwealth, then Shakespeare's conception of civic virtue is formed in dialogue with the work of Cicero. Cicero lays out his ideas on civic virtue in his *De Officiis*, one of the most widely read ethical texts in early modern England (Muldrew, *Economy* 132).[25] According to Cicero, in order to be a good

[25] For more on the dissemination of classical texts in grammar schools, see Mack 11-47 and Baldwin. Further studies of the classics and the early modern curriculum include Bushnell and Enterline.

citizen, and contribute towards the common good of the commonwealth, one must display *honestas*: attributes including 'discretion, wisdom, honesty, decorum, and an awareness of and responsibility towards the public good' (Withington, 'Putting the City' 203).

One of the most important aspects of Ciceronian civic virtue was the idea of the *vita activa*. In terms of the best state of the commonwealth, Cicero advocated the mixed polity approach whereby the state was governed through a combination of aristocratic, monarchical and democratic constitutions. As a citizen, one had a duty to participate in the governing of the commonwealth through office-holding because, as Cicero writes in the *De Officiis*, 'we be borne not for our selves alone: but some deal of our birth our countrey, some deal our parentes, some deal our frendes do claime' (Sig.B1^{v}).[26] More than this, embracing the *vita activa* meant prioritising the health of the commonwealth above all else.

Many early modern writers followed Cicero in advocating the need for civic virtue and the significance of the *vita activa*.[27] In his comedies, however, although Shakespeare endorses the need for both civic virtue and active citizenship, he problematizes Cicero's conception of them.[28] In Cicero's definition of citizenship, only male householders are eligible to be citizens and thus able to display qualities associated with civic virtue and active citizenship. Similarly, in early modern England the domain of citizenship was confined to male householders who could secure their enfranchisement 'either through

[26] All quotations in English from the *De Officiis* in this thesis are taken from *Marcus Tullius Ciceroes thre bokes of duties to Marcus his sonne*, trans. Nicholas Grimalde.
[27] See, for example, the well-known debate in Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) between Raphael Hythloday, the narrator and Peter Giles on the merits of the *vita activa,* 13-14. For an overview of Shakespeare's exploration of the active and contemplative lives see Curtis.
[28] See J. Archer for a discussion of the language of citizenship in Shakespeare's plays. J. Archer confines his discussion of citizenship to male householders.

patrimony, purchase or, most usually, a seven-year apprenticeship under the authority of a freeman and the craft or guild to which he belonged' (Withington, *Politics* 10). Once enfranchised as a citizen, male heads of household could be elected to public offices, such as those discussed above.

Yet recent studies carried out by social and cultural historians have worked to emphasise that citizenship and participation are much more widely disseminated throughout early modern society than once thought and that women too were capable of asserting political influence.[29] We can see Shakespeare's work as participating in this revaluation of citizenship through the way in which he interrogates notions of Ciceronian virtue. Chapters One and Two of this thesis, for example, reveal the way in which trustworthiness, a value listed by Cicero as one necessary for good citizenship, is required to be possessed by all in the community, not only the male householders. Chapters Three and Four, meanwhile, stress the need for the existence of fellow-feeling among all community members.

Chapters Three and Four of this thesis, therefore, also demonstrate a further interaction between Shakespeare and Ciceronian ideas of citizenship, in terms of Cicero's notion of civic friendship in *De Amicitia* as well as with Aristotle's discussions of civic friendship, justice and the community in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. While Chapters One and Two focus mostly on the household and the relationships between subjects, Chapters Three and Four move beyond the household to examine the effect that relationships between subjects can have

[29] See, for example, Crawford; Crawford and Mendelson; L. Gowing; Hindle, Introduction; Withington, *Politics* 195-230. In *Women in Early Modern England 1550-1720* (1998), Crawford and Mendelson write that their aim is to 'restore women to politics and politics to women' (345). They inform us that women who 'worked actively for the good of the community might earn the honorary status of "citizen" even if they held no formal qualifications' (52) and there were public offices, usually parochial ones that women could hold (50). Furthermore, women were also 'held accountable for a wide range of civic responsibilities' (52).

on their relationship with their ruler. Chapter Three examines the role played by the common consent of the people in the construction of the Viennese commonwealth in *Measure for Measure* and the intersections between political and sexual consent that occur throughout the play. Beginning with a historical overview of the common law tradition from Aristotle's *Politics* to Sir John Fortescue's *The Governance of England* (1471) and Hooker's *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (1594), the chapter then traces the dangers of common consent as they are depicted in the play, as opposed to individual consent which is seen as easily manipulated. In Claudio and Julietta's relationship, we witness the threat to the Duke's sovereignty of a mutually consenting union, while Angelo and Isabella's relationship represents the most forceful encounter between sexual and political consent in the play. Their interaction also attests to the importance of consent as fellow-feeling, an idea demonstrated by Aristotle in the *Politics* and the *Ethics* as well as by early modern writers. The relationship between ruler and subject is more important in *Measure for Measure* than it is for *The Comedy of Errors* or *The Merchant of Venice* because the play shows us that ultimately, the achievement of the common good requires that the members of the community consent to being governed, without which Vienna can only remain in stasis.

Chapter Four takes the idea of fellow-feeling as its main focus and investigates its role in *The Tempest* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. The chapter first considers the early modern use of the term in theological and ethical contexts, as well as its relationship to the discourse of civic friendship in order to argue that we can see fellow-feeling as providing a link between political subjects. It then turns to *The Tempest* to examine how this link between political subjects provides Miranda with a sense of political agency. However, the play also provides us with several occasions where self-interestedness dominates and

any sense of community is lacking. In *The Tempest*'s final scene, the role fellow-feeling plays in motivating Prospero to forgiveness suggests that the play endorses the need for its existence within a community, albeit tentatively. In *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, meanwhile, Shakespeare and Fletcher emphasise fellow-feeling as a particularly gendered emotion which is successful due to its ability to form a community between women. They also emphasise the necessity for the display of such an emotion to be a collaborative act: the more who demonstrate it, the more successful a display of fellow-feeling is likely to be in achieving a tangible outcome.

Investigating the politics of community thus involves considering the interrelated discourses of the commonwealth, citizenship and the household and the ways in which one depends on or complicates the other. One of the key ways in which the household and the commonwealth intersect is in the emphasis on maintaining the correct behaviour, either in terms of household roles or citizenship. This emphasis makes the political personal and brings us back to the idea of community as a set of interpersonal relations. Moreover, the requirement for active participation operates at all levels of the commonwealth, raising questions of eligibility and exclusivity. Drawing on these interrelated discourses outlined above, this thesis elucidates the wider implications of Shakespeare's political thought in his comedies.

Chapter One: Exploring the Household, the Marketplace and Communities of Trust in *The Comedy of Errors*

Unusually for Shakespeare, the entirety of *The Comedy of Errors* (1594) is staged against the same backdrop: 'the scene throughout represents an unlocalized street or "mart" in front of three houses'. [30] Thus the division between household and mart, inside and outside, private and public, is made highly visible for the duration of the performance. Unsurprisingly, therefore, previous readings of the play have often placed these two spaces in opposition to each other. Ann Christensen, for example, claims that the ending of the play 'represents a momentary reconciliation between the commercial and the domestic spheres struggling for dominance throughout the five acts' (19). Similarly, Curtis Perry argues that 'the reestablishment of familial bonds at the end of the play involves an explicit repudiation of the chains of obligation that make up community in its middle' (47), implying that familial bonds and community obligations cannot exist alongside each other. For others, the struggle between marketplace and household has a clear winner in 'the brave new commercial world in which human interactions become increasingly structured by monetary and contractual contexts' (Heinze 232). [31]

Jessica Slights, in contrast, notes that despite the fact that 'the play clearly portrays the affective bonds of the household more sympathetically than the merciless (and potentially violent) commercial ties of the marketplace … in Ephesus the domestic and mercantile realms are inextricably intertwined,

[30] The opening stage directions, taken from William Shakespeare, *The Comedy of Errors* ed. R. A. Foakes. I have quoted this edition of the play here because its stage directions set the scene most concisely (in comparision to the Norton Third edition which describes the same setting at far more length).

[31] See also Bruster *Drama* 76; Neville 377; Ward *Shakespeare* 137.

locked in a mutual dependency' ('Householding' 78). Slights explains further what she means by the idea of 'mutual dependency' with reference to the opening scene. While the Duke and Egeon's discussion depicts 'the ability of the marketplace to exceed the boundary of the agora and to influence events in the private realm of the household', it also 'insists upon the household's ability to affect life in the public arena' ('Householding' 79). 'Mutual dependency' therefore takes the form of a permeable boundary between the 'private realm of the household' and 'the public arena'. Yet, at the basis of this mutual dependency lies again a sense of competition between the two realms: Slights goes on to conclude that '[Egeon's] exchange with Solinus has prepared audiences for the continuing battle between the realms of commerce and domesticity that gives the plot its main shape' ('Householding' 79).

This chapter will argue that rather than showing the 'affective bonds of the household' and the 'commercial ties of the marketplace' as being in competition with one another, *The Comedy of Errors* in fact depicts them as being based on the same thing: trust. Shakespeare deliberately draws our attention to the importance of trust in the play's relationships by swapping the citizenry of his primary source text, Plautus' *Menaechmi*, for the merchants of Ephesus. While trust is important for all citizens of the commonwealth, its significance is intensified for merchants because their reputation for trustworthiness is what gains them credit and thus their livelihood. It is no coincidence that the first use of the word 'merchant' in the play is accompanied by the epithet 'well-dealing' (1.1.7), which the Duke uses as a synonym for trustworthiness. The importance of trust is also brought to the forefront in Ephesus' mercantile community because it is signified in the various physical objects that pass between the characters in the play.

Shakespeare portrays this trust as having its foundation in the politics of the household. The wider community in the play depends upon these bonds of trust formed in the household, because strong bonds of trust within the household are shown to be a prerequisite for a reputation for trustworthiness outside of it. Such a reputation in turn leads to credit, both in the economic sense of buying goods on the promise of future payment and in the social and political sense of being thought of as a good and worthy citizen. Through the mechanism of the confusion of identities, in *The Comedy of Errors* Shakespeare reveals the consequences of destroying the bonds of trust in the household. The breakdown of trust in the household results in the market and wider community being thrown into disarray, indicating in turn that domestic concerns are an integral part of, and not separate to, civic consciousness.

1. The Significance of Trust and Credit in Early Modern England

The importance of trust was ubiquitous in early modern England. While church sermons repeatedly urged the congregation to trust in God, political and moral texts highlighted that trust in one's fellow man was key to the success of the commonwealth. In his *De Officiis*, Cicero emphasises that in order to be considered a 'good citizen', one required a reputation for trustworthiness:

> *Iustis autem et fidis hominibus, id est bonis viris, ita fides habetur, ut nulla sit in iis fraudis iniuriaeque suspicio. Itaque his salutem nostram, his fortunas, his liberos rectissime committi arbitramur.* (2.33 202) [32]
>
> In this way credit is given to just and trustworthy men, that is, it is given to good citizens, so that in them [who are given credit] there is no suspicion of injury or deceit. And thus we believe that to these men our health, to these men our possessions, to these men our children are most properly committed.

[32] The Latin text of the *De Officiis* is taken from Cicero *De Officiis* trans. Walter Millar.

Vir bonus means both good man and good citizen and, in classical Latin literature, represents the epitome of moral and social status for all men, and the aim of Roman education. Indeed, one of the main aims of the *De Officiis* is to explore what it means to be such a man. Cicero states in his preface that he writes the book for his son, to show him, and others like him, how to become one. Renaissance humanists too placed great importance on the idea of the *vir bonus*, as is reflected in the popularity of the *De Officiis* in the early modern period. In the section of the *De Officiis* quoted above, Cicero equates men who are just and trustworthy with the *vir bonus* and therefore deserving of *fides*.[33] *'Ut'* introduces a clause of result: 'credit is given to just and trustworthy men, that is good citizens, *so that* in them [who are given credit] there is no suspicion of injury and deceit' (emphasis added). This use of the result clause highlights that one should give credit only to men whose status as a *vir bonus* has been proven ensuring that only those who could be trusted not to act deceitfully in future receive it. Once credit had indeed been given, Cicero tells us, it ought to be given unreservedly, emphasised by his use of the verb *arbitror*. While *arbitror* could be used to mean 'to believe', this is derived from its primary meaning 'to testify' (Lewis). This choice of verb (instead of *credere* whose primary meaning is 'to believe') adds the weight of legal testimony to the statement and, together with the superlative adjective *rectissime*, insists on the unfailing ability of the *vir bonus* to be trusted in all matters.[34] Therefore, once this status of *vir bonus* had been attained, a citizen was able to contribute to the commonwealth (in both the sense of the polity and the literal meaning of common *wealth*) and enter into the reciprocal bonds of trust that were essential

[33] *Fides* can mean 'trust, faith, confidence, reliance, credence, belief' ('*fides'* in Lewis) indicating the complex interrelated nexus of meanings between these terms. The context here indicates that 'credit' is the most appropriate translation.
[34] *Rectus* (straight) was often used figuratively in order to denote conformity to the expected standards of moral behaviour, see '*rectus*', Lewis.

for both the early modern economy and the wellbeing of the commonwealth as a whole.

Indeed, already a key value for citizens, trust became even more important with the rise of the early modern market, because the credit gained by the reputation of being a good citizen then led to the gaining of financial credit on which households relied more and more to survive. This is not to say that credit relations did not exist before the sixteenth century, but, as Theodore Leinwand writes, from the sixteenth century onwards 'the pervasiveness of such relations, their increasing theorization and rationalization, as well as the attendant flood of debt litigation, all indicate something new' (*Theatre* 150 n.1). In *The Economy of Obligation*, Craig Muldrew argues for the significance of credit as trust in early modern society:

> Credit . . . referred to the amount of trust in society, and as such consisted of a series of judgements about trustworthiness; and the trustworthiness of neighbours came to be stressed as the paramount communal virtue, just as trust in God was stressed as the central religious duty. Since, by the late sixteenth century, most households relied on the market for the bulk of their income, the establishment of trustworthiness became the most crucial factor needed to generate and maintain wealth. (148)

The existence of trust was thus fundamental to the creation and functioning of communities. In a society where 'behaviour in the community was constantly being evaluated' (I. Archer 77), this trust was constructed, represented and negotiated through the behaviour of the individual and the collective behaviour of the household, involving every member of the community. To trust someone, meant, in essence, to be able to predict their future actions (Fontaine 5). Niklas Luhmann, a German sociologist, was one of the first to give the idea of trust sustained attention. Muldrew explains that one of Luhmann's conclusions is that, although it is easy for trust to exist between

people who are very familiar with each other, 'in situations in which strangers must communicate and deal with one another, the unpredictable variability of responses, and other contingencies which exist in relationships of trust between single emotive agents, needs to be reduced to achieve social stability' (*Economy* 5). In early modern England, the solution to the problem of unpredictability was to be found in the codes of conduct that abounded in the period. The easiest way to signal a capacity for trustworthiness was to adhere to these codes because by so doing an individual allowed their behaviour to become predictable. This in turn meant that others could place their trust in them, confident in the knowledge that future behaviour would take place within acceptable boundaries, as past behaviour had done. As a result, 'a social ethic of credit as trust' (Muldrew, *Economy* 4) lay at the core of early modern English society whereby the need for trust acted as an impetus for citizens to adhere to these strict regulations for behaviour in order to ensure the creditworthiness of their households.

We can explore these structures of trust in four early modern institutions of key relevance to *The Comedy of Errors*: the household, the guild, the theatre and the Inns of Court.

1.1 Trust in the Early Modern Household

Given the commonly held perception of the household as a 'little commonwealth', early modern people often believed that a reputation for trustworthiness began in the home itself. Two popular manuals of household management, Dudley Fenner's 'The Order of Houshold' (1592) and John Dod and Robert Cleaver's *A Godlie Forme of Householde Government* (1598) illuminate the connection between behaviour in the household and reputation in the wider community. In their discussion of the need for unity and concord within the household, Dod and Cleaver write:

> He is reputed for a wise man, considering that he can so moderately handle so difficult and hard matters . . . and that he may easilie conserve and keepe his Citizens in peace and concord, that hath so wel established the same in his owne house and familie. (Sig.M^{r}, qtd. in Richardson 33)

Dod and Cleaver set up a causal relationship between having a reputation as a wise man with having previously established this reputation within the household through being an effective governor. Fenner makes a similar link when he says:

> The opinion and estimation of another mans goodnesse and wisedome, the which reverence is not onely honoured within the doores, but also shineth and extendeth it selfe into the cittie, so that he is taken for an honest man. (37, qtd. in Richardson 33)

Fenner's metaphor of one's reverence shining from indoors out into the city situates the home as the locus of reputation. Without a reputation for reverence 'within the doors', one cannot be considered 'an honest man' in the city because the relationship between honesty in the household and honesty in the city is not reciprocal. Honesty can extend from the household outwards into the city but not vice versa. Without a reputation for honesty, the household would not be able to gain any credit in the community.

Although Fenner and Dod and Cleaver discuss the behaviour of the head of the household specifically, the behaviour of each of the members of the household was equally important when it came to the reputation of the household as a whole. Any of them were capable of bringing it into disrepute through their actions. Each must therefore trust the other to do their part in maintaining the household's reputation. Scholars have long recognised that early modern conduct books depict an idealised view of life rather than a realistic view (Stretton, *Women* 10-11). Nevertheless, they are useful in allowing us to ascertain the values that were held important to early modern

society, even if they were not necessarily put into practice. In particular, household conduct books often stress the importance of the existence of trust between man and wife because the biggest burden for maintaining the household's reputation fell on their shoulders. William Gouge, for example, in *Of Domesticall Duties* (1622) instructs his readers that 'of all friends none ought to be more carefull, none more faithfull one to another then man and wife' (Sig.R3^{r}). Moreover, the liturgy of marriage gives the bond of trust between husband and wife added significance by stating that, once married, the husband and wife become as one flesh. As Adriana says in *The Comedy of Errors*, this meant that if one spouse were to 'play false', the other must 'digest the poison of thy flesh' (2.2.143-4), a symbolic representation of their necessary reliance on one another. Both are poisoned by the poison that only one of them consumes.

The need for a husband to be able to trust his wife is a constant theme in the conduct manuals. A wife's behaviour was of significance for the reputation of the household in two main ways: firstly, early modern people widely believed the honour of the household was contingent upon the honour of or, in other words, the chastity of, the wife. Secondly, the wife had a key part to play in the economic health of the household. The clearest evocation of the belief that the household's honour rests on that of the wife can be found in Dod and Cleaver's *A Godlie Forme of Householde Government* (1615), in which the authors seek to emphasise that:

> It is to be noted, and noted againe, that as the provision of [the] houshould dependeth onely on the Husband: even so the honour of all dependeth onely on the woman: in such sort, that there is no honour within the house, longer than a mans wife is honourable. (Sig.L6^{v}, qtd. in Shepard, 'Manhood' 75)

Dod and Cleaver pose a stark dichotomy between husband and wife that, as we will see, is not entirely accurate. Women too contributed to the provision of the household just as men contributed to its honourable reputation. Nevertheless, it is true that a wife's chastity played a central role in the reputation of the household: there is a reason, after all, that an anxiety about cuckoldry can be found throughout early modern drama (Bruster, 'Horn' 197). Chastity was one of the 'holy trinity' of virtues assigned to early modern women, with the other virtues being silence and obedience (Hull). One could thus convey one's chastity by embodying these two corresponding virtues.

In particular, the conduct manuals thoroughly emphasise the value of obedience. Several chapters of the third treatise of *Of Domesticall Duties*, which deals with the 'particular duties' of wives, for example, are devoted to the theme of wifely obedience.[35] Indeed, many conduct books stated that a wife should not only obey her husband but allow her behaviour to be moulded and shaped by him. In *The Golden Boke of Christen Matrimonye* (1543), Heinrich Bullinger commands:

> Thus also must every honest wyfe submit her selfe, to serve her husband wythe all her power, and gyve herselfe over frely and wyllyngly, never to forsake hym tyll the houre of death: to hold her content wyth her husbande, to love hym onely, to harken unto hym, & in all thynges to order her selfe after hys commaundement. (Sig.Jviii^{r} – Ki^{v})

Obedience is thus more than simply obeying the rules and involves the wife's willingness to 'order her selfe after hys [her husband's] commaundement' which implies the greatest level of possible subjection. In the first scene that takes place inside the household in *The Comedy of Errors,* Luciana preaches this

[35] Chapter 17 'Of a wives obedience in generall'; Chapter 35 'Of obedience to a husband in such things as he sinfully forbiddeth'; Chapter 43 'Of a wives active obedience'; Chapter 60 'Of wives forced and sullen obedience'; Chapter 63 'Of the extent of a wives obedience'.

same obedience to Adriana, reminding her that her husband is 'the bridle of your will' (2.1.13) and that men 'are masters to their females, and their lords' and, as such, Adriana must 'let your will attend on their accords' (2.1.24-25). Adriana's reluctance to 'order her selfe' after Antipholus' commandment emphasises the point made above, that the conduct manuals were more prescriptive than descriptive: not many would read them and see their own lives reflected there. Nevertheless, Adriana recognises that the compensation for such obedience is that one is able to 'bear some sway' (2.1.28) in the community because, by honourable behaviour, one upholds the reputation not only of yourself but also of the entire household. Conversely, if a wife's behaviour was judged to be inappropriate by the community, then members of the community would take it upon themselves to punish the wife, as well as her husband for failing to keep her under control, in a shaming ritual known as 'riding' (M. Ingram). For a wife, therefore, trustworthiness was closely tied to obedience and subjection because enacting these qualities gave the husband confidence that his own reputation and the reputation of his household would not be endangered by the reckless behaviour of his wife.

The second way in which the wife's behaviour impacted upon the reputation of the household was through her contributions to the household economy. Household manuals often stated that while the husband was in command of the provision and exchange of goods outside the household, the wife was responsible for the ordering and thrifty management of goods within the household. Lorna Hutson, in *The Usurer's Daughter*, notes that in his *Oeconomicus*, 'Xenophon's natural history of the division of household labour according to the scheme of husband "outdoors" and wife "indoors"' (22) was particularly influential on humanist thought. Translated into English in 1532 by Gentian Hervet as *Xenophons Treatise of Housholde*, Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*

stresses the significance of the wife's contribution to the household economy, albeit confining her economic activity to the indoor space of the household. The text takes the form of several dialogues between Critobulus and Socrates, one of which is on the matter of the wife's duties in the household. Socrates first asks Critobulus, 'Is there ever any other wyse man, that ye truste & charge so moche in your busynes, as ye do your wyfe?' (Sig.Bij^{r}-Biij^{v}) before expanding on the wife's role:

> But me thynkethe that a wyfe, beinge a good companion and a good felowe to her husbande in a house, is very necessary and within a littel as moche worthe as the husbande. For commonlye goodes and substance do come in to the house by the labour and payne of the man, but the woman is she for the moste parte, that kepeth and bestoweth it, where nede is. And if these two thinges stande well to gether and be wel ordeined, the houses do increace, if not they muste nedes decaye. (Sig.Biij^{v})

These words highlight the division of labour between man and wife but they clearly seek to emphasise that the wife's contribution is equally important to the maintenance of the household economy as her husband's is. Not only does Xenophon describe the wife as 'within a little as moche worthe' as the husband, he continues to elaborate upon this by illustrating that the work of both together is necessary to allow the wealth of the house to 'increce'. If the wife does not do her part, then it 'muste nedes decaye'.

Recent studies in early modern gender history show that, contrary to what Xenophon writes above, women's involvement in the household economy did not only take the form of the custodianship and ordering of the household goods. They also contributed significantly to both the household and the commonwealth through their domestic labour.[36] Bullinger recognises the

[36] See, for example, Wall 67-76; Richardson 29-30; Orlin 128; Shepard, 'Manhood' 91-95.

importance of women's labour in *The Golden Boke of Christen Matrimonye* (1543) when he says:

> Many [men] objecte & laye for theyr excuse, poverte, & saye, if they shoulde marry, they were utterly beggarde for all ever. To whome I aunswere, If they be not able to healpe for to mayntayne an honest wyfe, which wyll also laboure, worke and take paynes to get her owne lyvynge, howe are they than able to mayntayne theyr whores, and to awaye wythe the costes and charges that they spende in wanton and ryottous companye. (Sig.Bivj^{v}-Bivj^{r})

Bullinger's assumption that 'an honest wyfe' will 'also laboure, worke and take paynes to get her owne lyvynge' is notable because he recognises that wives can contribute to the economic health of their household in more substantial ways than the ordering of goods. Thus in *The Comedy of Errors* the bag with 500 ducats in it which is kept under the desk 'covered o'er with Turkish tapestry' (4.1.104) represents the fruits of both Adriana's and Antipholus' labour. A wife, therefore, must show herself not only to be obedient and chaste but also to be hard-working and willing to contribute to the wealth of the household which in turn would be reflected in the household's reputation.

At the same time, a wife must also be able to trust her husband. If a wife's reputation was based on chastity and obedience, a husband's reputation was based on his ability to provide for his family and to be thrifty in his spending.[37] The image of a bad husband as one 'who spends his meanes upon women, throwes it away at play, wastes it in eating and drinking, and prodigally consumes it in pride of apparell, and other vices of like excesse' (Aleman Sig.Yy8^{r}) appears in early modern literature as often as the image of a bad wife as a disobedient, loquacious shrew. Linked to this unthrifty behaviour was

[37] For a detailed account of the qualities needed to be considered a good husband, see Shepard, 'Manhood' 83-84.

also a failure to heed the injunction that the husband 'must not disdaine to bee counselled by his wife, to heare her reasons, and to waigh her words' (B. Sig.F6^{v}). As the one carrying the responsibility of feeding her family every day, the wife would likely advise her husband to stop going to the alehouse in order to save money. The representation of a bad husband as a spendthrift who does not listen to his wife's advice thus highlights 'the contradiction between the economic dependence of wives on their husbands and their financial responsibility to keep the family alive' (Fontaine 134). A wife must therefore trust her husband not only to protect the reputation of the household by upholding the image of a thrifty and honest citizen but also to bring home enough money to sustain the household economy. Although these images of the wife as obedient and the husband as provider are in many ways stereotypical, that they were nevertheless images that the average man and woman sought to maintain is shown by the rising levels of litigation in the latter half of the sixteenth century. Specifically, Laura Gowing shows that in the church courts the majority of plaintiffs were females who were concerned with slurs against their chastity (60-61), while the male plaintiffs, far fewer in number, were concerned with accusations of violence, cruelty and a questioning of his ability to be 'able to live of himself' (129).

1.2 Trust and Mercantilism

For merchants, such as we find in *The Comedy of Errors*, a reputation for trustworthiness was vital because such a reputation formed the foundation for the lending and receiving of credit. Due both to the oral nature of sixteenth-century English culture and to the lack of available *specie* with which to mint coins in the period (Muldrew, *Economy* 3), merchants often undertook transactions on the basis of verbal contracts alone, dramatically increasing the need for trustworthiness. Gerard Malynes in his *Lex Mercatoria* (1622), an

instruction manual for merchants, details several different types of transactions which require a written document such as Bills of Obligation, Bills of Exchange, Regal Contracts and Notarial Contracts. However, he writes that verbal contracts are the most commonly used for 'the daily buying and selling of commodities either for readie money, or payable at some daies of payment' (Sig.M3^{r}). Malynes sums up the importance of a merchant's credit when he writes that 'the Credit of Merchants is so delicate and tender, that it must bee cared for as the apple of a mans eye' (Sig.K4^{r}).

In the *Lex Mercatoria*, Malynes explains one of the sets of regulations governing merchants' behaviour. The title of the treatise, and its main subject, refers to the ancient laws of merchants which govern the operations of merchants in all countries. As Malynes explains, although each country has its own system of laws and justice, 'yet the *Law-Merchant* hath alwaies beene found *semper eadem*, that is, constant and permanent without abrogation, according to her most auncient customes, concurring with the law of nations in all countries. Great reverence is due unto Lawes at all times, and hath beene in all ages' (Sig.A3^{r}). Following these rules would therefore help merchants to maintain their creditworthiness.

As well as the *lex mercatoria*, the behaviour of merchants in England was also regulated by the guilds, or companies, to which they belonged.[38] Mercantile guilds differed from trade and craft guilds because they were composed of wholesale traders who dealt in goods that they themselves had not produced

[38] Gadd and Wallis point out that the term 'guild' 'has a contentious history' because some historians believe that the term guild should only apply to the religious fraternities from which many of the London companies arose and that only the word 'company' should be used to describe trade and craft guilds. Nevertheless, Gadd and Wallis recognise that guild is a useful term because it 'allows comparisons, generalisations and abstractions to be made that cross local, regional and national boundaries' (12 n.16). They thus come to the solution of using 'guild' in a generic sense and 'company' to specify the London companies, as I will also do here.

(Ogilvie 19).[39] For members of all companies, both mercantile and otherwise, the companies 'served as aids to defining creditworthiness' (Gadd and Willis 10). No matter their size or their trade, their 'image was fundamental to their influence' (Gadd and Willis 10) and they invested a great deal of energy in regulating the activities of their members, both trading activities and general behaviour. A look at some of the ordinances of the mercantile companies reveals a concern with maintaining the highest standards, concerns also reflected in the merchant handbooks of the period. Unlike the household conduct books, the companies had the power to enforce their regulations or, at least, punish those who did not obey: anyone found to be contravening the company's ordinances could be fined from in the region of a few shillings up to twenty pounds, and risked being disenfranchised or even imprisoned. A charter from Henry IV to the Merchant Adventurers' Company in 1407, the first letters patent to be found in the surviving inventory of the company's papers, emphasizes that there was a great need for the creation of such ordinances. The charter early on declares the need for better government among merchants:

> As we have heard that through lack of good and sane rule and government, diverse losses, dissensions, troubles and difficulties have been too frequently brought about in times past among the merchants of our kingdom of England and of our other dominions, in the regions of Holland, Zealand, Brabant and Flanders, and in whatever other parts beyond the sea which are in friendship with us, where they live and trade, and that in all probability still greater losses than these (which God forbid) may be feared to come to pass in the future unless for the sake of better government among all the same merchants we quickly turn our protecting hand. (Lingelbach 218-219)

[39] According to Anthony Munday's 1618 edition of John Stow's *The Survay of London,* the ten mercantile companies of London are: the Merchants of the Staple, Merchant Adventurers, Merchants of Russia, of Elbing, of Levant, of Spain, and of East India, new French Merchant Adventurers, Company of French Merchants and the Merchants of Virginia (Gadd 47 n.17).

The ordinances are cast as the antidote to the losses that arise from disputes between English merchants and their foreign counterparts and as teaching the merchants how to behave honestly and trustworthily in order to avoid future conflicts and dissensions which endanger not only their own credit but the credit of the entire commonwealth. Queen Elizabeth's charter, in 1564, incorporating the fellowship of the Merchants of the Staple, makes similar remarks about the need to redress 'all manner of trespasses, hurts, misprisons, excesses, violences, and injuries, to merchants strangers in the said foreign countries or in any of them done by the said merchants of the said Fellowship' (Rich 314), indicating the continuing requirement for merchants' behaviour to be regulated in order to protect their honour and credit, as well as the apparent inadequacy of the *lex mercatoria* to alleviate arising disputes. As well as setting out terms of guidance for merchants' interactions with other traders, company ordinances are also concerned with internal regulation. Each company formed, in many ways, its own community and members had to be able to trust each other, relying as they did on one another for current relevant trading information.

Both the ordinances and the companies' handbooks indicate that the ability to elicit trust from outsiders by performing trustworthiness was a highly necessary skill for merchants. There were several ways to project an impression of trustworthiness, depending on the situation. Unsurprisingly, in a society that highly regulated clothing via sumptuary laws,[40] appearance was significant, especially in the case where an individual was dealing with strangers to the town or was themselves a stranger. Social psychologists recognise two different types of trust: cognitive trust and affective trust.

[40] For the importance of the sumptuary laws in Elizabethan culture see Raffield, *Images* 158-167.

Cognitive trust functions on the basis of knowledge where one makes use of empirical information about someone before deciding to trust them, most often gathered from a previous transaction or awareness of that person's reputation (Lewis and Weigert, 'Trust' 970). Affective trust, on the other hand, is based on emotion, the feeling that one has about someone either upon meeting them or due to the emotions invested in their relationship with them (Lewis and Weigert, 'Trust' 971). It involves a certain level of trusting in yourself to make the right decision (Lewis and Weigert, 'Social Dynamics' 26). The majority of decisions about a person's trustworthiness feature both cognitive and affective trust in differing measures. We can see in the relationship between Antipholus of Ephesus and Adriana in *The Comedy of Errors*, for example, that trust between husband and wife is likely to feature a greater proportion of affective trust than is probably present in a business relationship because both react highly emotionally when they believe their trust has been betrayed.

Affective trust becomes important in trading relationships when no basis for cognitive trust exists. In such cases, appearance is vital to the decision of whether to trust someone or not because, deprived of any other knowledge, it is the only information available on which to base such a decision. As a result, 'traders lent based on looks and they themselves acknowledged it' (Fontaine 273). An emphasis on appearance is also found in the ordinances of both the company of Merchant Adventurers and their rivals, the Merchants of the Staple. The ordinances of the Merchant Adventurers state that if any apprentice 'weare anie apparaile not fytt for his estate or qualitie', he will first have the inappropriate items taken from him and be sent back to his master. If he carries out the offence a second time he will be 'shipped away or otherwise dealt withall' (Lingelbach 47). The ordinances of the Merchant of the Staple,

meanwhile, specify very exactly what an apprentice can and cannot wear. They should not wear any silk or any Spanish leather but should make sure that their jacket is made of 'fustian canvas or worstead' and that they wear shirts with only one ruffle (Rich 189). Otherwise, they too risk being sent away. The severity of the punishments incurred indicates the importance of dressing appropriately.

Appearance, however, was only the beginning. According to conduct manuals written for merchants, necessary behavioural qualities are honesty, accuracy, discretion and the display of the required knowledge (Sullivan 26). John Brown's *The Marchants Avizo* (1589) is one such conduct manual. Brown stresses that disreputable behaviour in any aspect of one's lifestyle, whether it be feasting or gaming, can impact severely on one's credit and standing (Sig.Bij^{v}). He emphasises this warning by writing from the perspective of someone deciding whether or not to give out credit: 'Be not hasty in giving credit to every man; but take heed to a man that is ful of words, that hath red eyes, that goeth much to law, and that is suspected to live unchaste' (Sig.Iiiij^{v}). Anyone who shows signs of engaging in any 'unchaste' behaviour is assumed to be too risky to give credit to. As such, the ordinances of both the Merchant Adventurers and the Merchants of the Staple display a concern with disreputable behaviour, explicitly forbidding playing at cards, dice or any kind of gambling, keeping company with 'eville women' (Rich 190), excessive drinking or fighting amongst themselves or with others, slandering other members of the fellowship or using inappropriate language.[41]

Adhering to the regulations of the guilds, taking care of appearances and cultivating a reputation as responsible and diligent builds up cognitive trust

[41] For Merchant Adventurers, see Lingelbach: 47, 169-170, 172-175. For The Merchants of the Staple, see Rich: 171-174, 190-191, 194.

and accrues credit in the community because such behavioural patterns allow people to predict that an individual's future behaviour will be honest and trading with such a person is less risky. Thus, just as husbands and wives must conform to certain rules and regulations to protect the honour and credit of their household, so too did merchants have to behave in a certain way to create and sustain a reputation for trustworthiness both for themselves and for their guild. Like the reputation of the household, the reputation of the mercantile guilds rested on a structure of trust whereby the guild must be able to trust its members and the members must be able to trust one another in order to reach their full potential.

1.3 Trust in the Early Modern Theatre

A third important context in which we can see this underlying necessity for trust is in the theatre itself. Philip Henslowe's diary, in which he details his transactions relating to the Rose and Fortune playhouses as well as his other investments, reveals that theatrical companies were highly commercial enterprises involved in debt and credit relations in an attempt to make profit. They functioned very differently to guilds, however. London's public theatres were situated in the city's liberties which meant that, although plays still had to be licensed, and the companies existed under royal or aristocratic patronage, they escaped the external governmental control to which the guilds were subjected (Bruster, *Drama* 3, 9-10; Agnew 54-55). Moreover, the regulation and decision making processes of the theatre companies fell not to elected officers, as they would in a guild, but rather to the company's shareholders. As Jean Howard writes, 'theatre companies had no halls, courts or structures of regulation' (*Theater* 15). In 1594, the year in which *The Comedy of Errors* was first performed, Shakespeare himself became one of the eight shareholders in the company of the Lord Chamberlain's men before becoming a 'housekeeper'

in the Globe theatre in 1599 and later also in Blackfriars. Housekeepers owned the buildings of the theatre and rented them out to players in return for a share of the profits. Share-holding and housekeeping in a theatre company were risky businesses. They could bring in substantial profit but they also involved significant expenditure and were thus an unstable venture for all involved.

Indeed, the necessity felt by each shareholder and housekeeper for the company to succeed, and the absence, for the most part, of formal regulations like a guild, meant that the shareholders must rely upon each other to act honourably and in the company's best interests. In her discussion of the financial arrangements of the Fortune playhouse, Susan Cerasano remarks that:

> the very language of shareholding, which styled a man "adventurer, storer and sharer", suggests more precisely the diverse associations intrinsic to the special relationship between the sharer and his investment. It emphasizes the importance of protection, cooperation, and even trust (financial and otherwise) in the agreements, along with the spirit of nurtured risk inherent in the whole tenuous business. ('Business' 233)

We can find this rhetoric of shareholding, which emphasises mutual responsibility and trust, for example, in a lease drawn up by Philip Henslowe and Edward Alleyn in 1608 for one thirty-second part of the income of the Fortune playhouse. The lease is addressed to a player called Thomas Downton and exhorts him to:

> bear a proportionate part of all such necessary and needful charges as shall be bestowed or laid forth in the new building or repairing of the said playhouse during the said term of thirteen years with[out] fraud or coven; [also that he will] not at any time hereafter during the said term give over the faculty or quality of playing, but shall in his own person exercise the same to the best and most benefit he can, within the playhouse aforesaid, during the time aforesaid, unless he shall become

> unable by reason of sickness or any other infirmity. (Wickham et al. 216-217)

The language adopted appeals to Downton's sense of personal responsibility to do the best he can for the company upon joining. It is not enough to be without 'fraud or coven' but he must also 'in his own person exercise the same [his playing] to the best and most benefit he can' because the quality of his playing will directly impact the success and thus the profit of the playhouse. The level of trust involved in this lease is highlighted when we compare it to another one that Henslowe and Alleyn drew up six years later, in 1614, addressed to another player, Robert Dawes:

> The said Robert Dawes shall and will plaie with such company, as the said Phillipp Henslowe and Jacob Meade shall appoynte, for and during the tyme and space of three yeares from the date hereof for and at the rate of one whole share, according to the custome of players; and that he the said Robert Dawes shall and will at all tymes during the said terme duly attend all suche rehearsall, which shall the night before the rehearsall be given publicky out; and if he the said Robert Dawes shall at any tyme faile to come at the hower appoynted, then he shall and will pay to the said Phillipp Henslowe and Jacob Meade, their executors or assignes, Twelve pence; and if he come not before the saide rehearsal is ended, then the said Robert Dawes is contented to pay Twoe shillings . . . and if that he, the said Robert Dawes, happen to be overcome with drinck at the time when he [ought to] play, by the judgement of Fower of the said company, he shall and will pay Tenne shillings. (Chambers 256-7)

The terms of this contract are far stricter, introducing financial penalties for failure to meet obligations, which closely echoes the ordinances of the guilds. Moreover, the obligations themselves are far more specific compared to the earlier lease for Downton which presumably encompasses all these obligations in a general manner when it instructs him to play to the most benefit he can. This change in the language and tone of the leases perhaps reflects that in Henslowe's previous experiences sharers had not lived up to the trust placed

in them, alongside a growing awareness of the importance of each person's contribution to the company in terms of the company's overall success. This contract also indicates the necessary reliance of theatre impresarios such as Henslowe and Langley, and owners of playhouses, on their players. They may provide the money necessary for running the playhouse but they needed the players in order to be able to bring in a profit.

The wider community of the playhouse, beyond the shareholders, also functioned on trust. Players were bound to specific companies or playhouses for a designated term, often three years. This arrangement was supposed to be beneficial to both the theatre and the players because it provided a measure of security and stability. When such an agreement broke down, however, many difficulties were caused for both parties, exemplifying the need for everyone to do their part in maintaining such an agreement.[42]

1.4 Trust in the Early Modern Inns of Court

The first recorded performance of *The Comedy of Errors*, as is well known, did not take place in a playhouse but in Gray's Inn, one of the Inns of Court. The Inns of Court offered an education in law to ambitious young gentlemen and are often referred to as 'England's third university' as in J. H. Baker's study of them entitled *The Third University of England*. Like London's theatres, the Inns were situated in the liberties, outside the boundaries of the city's jurisdiction (Cormack 269). Moreover, they deliberately made the decision not to be incorporated in order to retain a greater degree of constitutional flexibility (Baker, *Legal* 46). A general order given in Lincoln's Inn in 1614, proceeding from 'his Majestie's especial care and commandment', highlights the Inns of

[42] See, for example, the case of the Swan playhouse and the Earl of Pembroke's players in 1597 (Wickham et al. 212).

Courts' status as 'privileged and exempted places' that make their own rules and thus the necessity for the Inns themselves to be on the look out for 'ill subjects or dangerous persons' on their premises (Baildon 441). The privilege of the Inns was such that they claimed the right to forbid legal actions against members of the society by any non-members without their consent, a right that remained undisputed by the Crown (Baildon xxxv). Given their autonomous nature, the Inns followed a system of regulation based on 'an arrangement which is expected to work through general consent, even though it is not clothed in a form recognised by law'. As a result, the Inns functioned mainly through 'a combination of trust, agency, contract and custom' (Baker, *Legal* 74).

Many of the entries in the black books of Lincoln's Inn, which record the minutes of meetings and all financial transactions, demonstrate the need for trust and consent among the members. The Council of the Masters of the Bench undertook most of the governmental decisions and, like the guilds, they made orders intending to safeguard the Inn's reputation. Displays of violence by members were strictly prohibited, as we see in the example of Mr Thomas Ayloffe. In an entry dated June 23rd, 1588, we are told:

> Mr Thomas Ayloffe, who has comitted divers disorders in brawling within this House with one of the butlers, for the which he hath been formerly admonished by putting out of commons , and by a fyne lately imposed upon him, and yet nevertheless hath nowe of late since the last Counsell committed further and greater disorder in this House in making an assault and affray . . . upon an utter-barrester's servant, in which action divers others of his adherents were present and confederate to execute mischief, in revenge of former grudges & quarrels heretofore examined by the Maisters of the Benche. It is therefore ordered at this Counsell by one consent that the said Mr Ayloffe is not fitte to be any more Fellowe of this House, but shall be utterly expulsed the Fellowship thereof forever. (Baildon 9)

Due to their lack of a fixed constitution, the Masters of the Bench have a certain flexibility in how they deal with offences. In this instance, Mr Ayloffe is first given the benefit of the doubt, only receiving a fine for his behaviour. He continues to act in a manner unbefitting to a member of the Inn, however, breaking the implicit trust the other members have in him and in each other. The Masters of the Bench therefore have no choice but to come to the decision, by 'one consent', to expel him from fellowship of the house. The mention of 'by one consent' is significant because it indicates that the Masters of the Bench have discussed the situation and come to a decision together. His expulsion is not a foregone conclusion as it might have been in the case of the guilds, where many of the ordinances state the punishment incurred if they are defied. This sense of the flexibility and self-governing nature of the Inns is also reflected in the fact that, in many entries throughout the black book for Lincoln's Inn, Members of the Bench respond to and grant requests or petitions of Inn members (e.g. Baildon 8, 39). All members of the Inn therefore possess agency, albeit not equally, in the formation of their community. Such a system is only able to function if the majority of the members trust each other to be working towards the same goal. For members of the Inns, therefore, as for members of theatrical companies, guilds or the household, the ability to trust one another acted as an essential foundation of all duties carried out.

Hence, structures of trust are endemic to many aspects of life in early modern society. In all the contexts we have looked at above, the household, the guild, the theatre and the Inns of Court, each member is responsible for ensuring that they are worthy of trust which can then be transformed into credit, whether that be in terms of the social credit of reputation, financial credit or both. *The Comedy of Errors'* first recorded performance in Gray's Inn took place as part of the entertainment for the winter revels whereby the students, principally

the Lord of Misrule and his followers, took charge of the festivities (McCoy 290). Many critics have written about the play's interactions with the themes of the revels, often arguing that the mayhem of the revels is reflected in some way in the many confusions of the play (Cormack; Knapp and Kobialka; Lanier). Rather than undermining the need for trust, the confusions and topsy-turviness of the play in fact increase our awareness of its necessity. By removing some of the structures of trust that we have discussed above and revealing the disarray that results, the play emphasises their significance to the functioning of the commonwealth.

2. *The Comedy of Errors*: The Making and Breaking of Trust in the Household

The Comedy of Errors investigates two important household relationships in terms of trust and credit: that between husband and wife, and that between master and servant. Before looking at the play's depiction of these relationships in more detail, however, thinking about *The Comedy of Errors*' relationship to one of its key source texts, Plautus' *Menaechmi*, allows us to identify the ways in which Shakespeare emphasises the household's importance in his play. In the *Menaechmi*, twin sons of a merchant of Syracuse are separated at the age of seven when one of them is accidently left behind by his father in Tarentum. He is subsequently found by a wealthy merchant and taken to Epidamnus, where he grows up and marries a wealthy wife. Falling out with her, however, he becomes acquainted with the Courtesan Erotium and presents her with jewellery and presents that he has stolen from his wife. Meanwhile, his twin Sosicles, who is renamed Menaechmus in his lost brother's honour, arrives on the island to seek his missing sibling. Many confusions ensue, much as in the case of *The Comedy of Errors*. Audiences have noted *The Comedy of Errors'* relationship to the *Menaechmi* since its first

performance in Gray's Inn, where a member of the audience remarked it is 'like to Plautus his *Menaechmus*' (Greg 22). Thus Elizabethan audiences themselves would have been able to draw comparisons between the *Menaechmi* and *The Comedy of Errors*.

One of the most perceptible changes that Shakespeare makes to the *Menaechmi* is to greatly increase the role of the wife while correspondingly diminishing the role of the courtesan (Whitworth 20; Burrow 150). This fits in turn with Shakespeare's relocation of the play from Epidamnus to Ephesus because it highlights the play's relation to St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians, which describes and sets out the duties of husbands and wives, as well as parents, children and servants.[43] Several characters in *The Comedy of Errors*, particularly Adriana, express concern with offices and duties, emphasising the letter's significant influence on the play. In the *Menaechmi* no such concern with the office or duty of a husband or wife is apparent, highlighted by Menaechmus' remark at the end of the play that he would auction off his wife if he could.

Another way in which Shakespeare adds greater significance to the role of the household is through his combination of the themes and structures of Roman New Comedy with those of Greek romance. Although he takes the basic plot from the *Menaechmi*, as well as from *Amphitryon*, as we will see below, he frames it with the story of Egeon derived from the tale of Prince Apollonius of Tyre. He most likely derives this tale from Gower's version in the *Confessio Amantis*. As such, the opening and closing scenes of *The Comedy of Errors* align very much with the Greek romance tradition of shipwreck and familial separation, adding an emphasis on family that we do not usually find in Roman New Comedy. Egeon's opening speech initially sets up the dichotomy

[43] On the Ephesian context of *The Comedy of Errors*, see C. Slights, *Commonwealths* 13-15, 18-19.

between the household and the marketplace when he tells the Duke that his work as a trading merchant 'drew me from kind embracements of my spouse' (1.1.43), eventually resulting in his wife's assumed death. Similarly, the ending of the play follows very much in the Greek romance tradition with its emphasis on family and reunion. The structures of the household, the revelation of Aemilia as Egeon's wife and the two Antipholi as his sons, are responsible for bringing the play to a harmonious conclusion.

As well as foregrounding its role, Shakespeare also completely changes the perspective we are given of life in the household. In Menaechmus of Epidamnus' opening speech in Plautus' play, Menaechmus is 'speaking at the door to his wife within' and scolds her:

> Unless you were worthless, unless you were foolish, unless you were stark wild and an idiot, that which you see is disagreable to your husband, you would deem to be so to yourself as well. Moreover, if after this day you do any such thing to me, I'll force you, a divorced woman, turned out of my doors to go visit your father. For as often as I wish to go out of the house, you are detaining me, calling me back, asking me questions; whither I am going, what matter I am about, what business I am transacting, what I am wanting, what I am bringing, what I have been doing out of doors? I've surely brought home a custom-house officer as my wife; so much am I obliged to disclose all my business, whatever I have done and am doing. (1.2.1-9)[44]

The perspective Plautus gives us of the household is of the husband looking backwards into the house as he finally manages to escape his wife's clutches. We never enter into the household but rather always remain on the street. This is in part due to Roman staging conventions where plays were usually performed in 'small and intimate' playing spaces 'dominated by doors which

[44] All quotations, in English, from the *Menaechmi* are taken from Plautus, *The Comedies of Plautus* trans. Henry Thomas Riley. Quotations in Latin are taken from Plautus, *Plauti Comoediae*. Ed. F. Leo.

lead into one or more household interiors, which remain out of bounds so far as the action of the play is concerned' (Burrow 136). Nevertheless, Plautus makes it clear that Menaechmus' need to flee from his home derives from more than a staging convention by highlighting his fear of his wife following him outside into the public domain. Peniculus' comment to Menaechmus, 'that your wife mayn't follow you, you are looking back ever and anon' (1.2.51), reveals this fear clearly.

Noticeably, Menaechmus delivers his speech at the threshold of the house, which is presented throughout the play as a place of danger because it is where the inside and the outside, the public and the private, are at the highest risk of intersecting with one another and where the wife is in control.[45] The wife's authority at the doorstep is emphasised by Menaechmus' relief that 'by my taunts I've driven my wife from the door at last' (1.2.18) and by Menaechmus' description of her as a 'customs-house officer' or *portitor* in Plautus' original text. While *portitor* had the meaning of customs-house officer which references the close scrutiny given to objects entering the household, it comes etymologically from *portus*, meaning gate or door, referencing the general authority of the wife in controlling entry and exit to the household. In *The Comedy of Errors* too, the entry to the household is presented as Adriana's domain: just as Menaechmus' wife tries to control the doorway to stop him leaving, Adriana posts Dromio at her door to stop Antipholus entering. Whereas, however, in the *Menaechmi* we never enter Menaechmus' household and only see it from the perspective of the husband, yearning to get out and escape, in *The Comedy of Errors* we also see it from the perspective of the wife, lamenting that she must stay inside. Unlike Plautus, Shakespeare is not confined by staging conventions to exterior settings and makes frequent use

[45] For more on the 'symbolic power of the doorstep' see L. Gowing 116.

of movements between interior and exterior spaces, as do many late sixteenth century dramatists (Burrow 136). In *The Comedy of Errors* in particular, he emphasises the transitions between the two spaces by having Adriana and Luciana explicitly refer to the gendered nature of the public-private divide. In her response to Adriana's complaint that men have more liberty, for example, Luciana explains it is 'because their business still lies out o'door' (2.1.11). The effect of this change of perspective on the household is two-fold: it places life within the household more at the centre of events and it creates a much more complicated relationship dynamic between husband and wife because we witness both points of view, allowing us to analyse the vicissitudes and importance of trust in their relationship much more easily.

2.1 Trust Between Husband and Wife in *The Comedy of Errors*

Adriana's lack of trust in her husband is easily discernible not long after the play begins. As soon as Antipholus of Ephesus fails to return home for dinner, she immediately decides 'I know his eye doth homage otherwhere' (2.1.104). Noticeably, the rift in Adriana's relationship with her husband is not caused by the confusions of the play but merely exacerbated by it. In Act 5, Scene 1, she tells the Abbess that 'This week he hath been heavy, sour, sad, / And much different from the man he was' (5.1.45-46). Yet the play only takes place during the course of a day, meaning that this does not account for Antipholus' behaviour during the rest of the week that Adriana refers to. Noticeably, Luciana, Adriana's sister, presents trust as a gendered issue when she tells Antipholus of Syracuse: 'Alas, poor women, make us but believe, / Being compact of credit, that you love us' (3.2.21-22). Luciana plays on the meaning of credit deriving from its Latin etymology where the verb *credere* meant to believe. In describing women as 'being compact of credit', she depicts them as very willing to believe the words of others, even when they do not necessarily

merit such trust. Mistaking Antipholus of Syracuse for his brother, Luciana makes this plea to Antipholus to encourage him to lie to Adriana and pretend he still loves her, even as he declares his love for Luciana herself. Luciana thus links a specifically feminine willingness to trust with a vulnerability to deceit. In light of this, Adriana is right to be wary. She associates this wariness with her married state when she reprimands Luciana for counselling patience as a remedy to Antipholus' perceived unfaithfulness: 'So thou, that hast no unkind mate to grieve thee, / With urging helpless patience would relieve me' (2.1.38-39). It is easy for a single woman to counsel forgiveness, Adriana argues, because she does not realise what is at stake. Adriana is more than aware of the fact that her reputation is intimately tied up with that of her husband.

More significant than Adriana's mistrust of her husband in itself is the reason for this mistrust. It stems from the fact that, by failing to come home for dinner on time (an occurrence we are led to believe must be fairly frequent for Antipholus knows well that 'my wife is shrewish when I keep not hours' (3.1.2)), Antipholus of Ephesus is signalling a complete lack of respect for Adriana's contribution to the household economy. In recent years, there have been several productive economic readings of *The Comedy of Errors* but they tend to focus on the market and leave no room for the household (Perry; Gordon; Raman). We have already discussed above the importance of women's labour to the household economy. The significance of their contribution, however, is also emphasised in Proverb 31 of the Old Testament in a way that is particularly relevant to *The Comedy of Errors*. Proverb 31 contains 'the words of King Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him' (Whittingham Prov. 31.1). From 31.11 to 31.31, the Proverb focuses on the fact that a 'virtuous woman' is one who 'the heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he will have no need of spoil' (31.11). Several early modern

manuals of household management quote this verse when advising wives of their duties, including *Of Domesticall Duties*.[46] The significance of the verse lies in the fact that the outcome of a husband trusting his wife is clearly given as an economic one. The rest of the Proverb goes on to list the many different types of domestic labour a 'virtuous woman' and wife would undertake: working with wool and flax, spinning and weaving, bringing food from afar like 'the merchant ships', feeding her household, planting and nurturing vineyards, making tapestries and clothing as well as linen to sell. Proverb 31 ends by declaring that a husband should praise his wife (31.28) and 'give her the fruit of her hands and let her own works praise her at the gates' (31.31). Antipholus of Ephesus denies Adriana this opportunity to be a 'virtuous woman' in whom 'his heart can safely trust' by showing complete disrespect for 'the fruit of her hands', represented in the most literal way possible by his disregard for the food she has spent time preparing for him. Dod and Cleaver, in their commentary on the proverbs of Solomon, write in relation to verse 31.31 that:

> Husbands are called upon, and provoked to praise their good wives really, as well as vocally, in deede as well as in word to recompence her paines, and good service with due rewards. . . . even as in games and conflicts the conquerors are both rewarded with some price, and praised openly in the publike assembly by proclamation: so let this worthie woman hitherto spoken of be provided, for that her husbands largesse may be a testimonie in the Church, in the market, in meetings of neighbours and friends, and in all assemblies, that she hath deserved well, and he upon due cause doth deale so bountifully with her: and if God take him away before her, let him by leaving her an ample portion, according to his estate, publish to the world that he hath found her a beneficiall yoke-fellow. (*Proverbs of Salomon* Sig.Oo4^{v}-Oo4^{r})

[46] Gouge Sig.R7^{r}; Crompton Sig.B^{v}; Hill Sig.E^{r}; Bullinger Sig.Mviiij^{r}, Dod and Cleaver, *A Godlie Forme* Sig.P5^{r}, Ste. B. Sig.F6^{r}-F7^{v}, Perkins, *Christian Economy* Sig.B7^{r}.

Dod and Cleaver considerably expand the words of the Proverb and in particular introduce the idea of the need to praise a virtuous wife in public, which is not at all present in the proverb itself, reflecting the early modern concern with reputation. The husband's words of public praise to his wife are cast as performative: by publicly declaring that his wife is 'a beneficial yoke-fellow', the husband creates for his wife a reputation for virtue. This is of advantage not only to the wife herself but also to the husband because it testifies to his largesse and thus has equal benefits for his reputation. The number of public places mentioned – 'in the Church, in the market, in meetings of neighbours and friends, and in all assemblies' – stresses that a wife's reputation for virtue should be made known as far and wide as possible. Antipholus of Ephesus not only fails to praise his wife in public but also in private and thus denies Adriana her 'due reward' of a virtuous reputation and deprives himself of a reputation for dealing 'bountifully' with his wife.

Antipholus' reluctance to appreciate Adriana's domestic labours and act as a dutiful husband means that he endangers his status as a respected citizen. As Joseph Candido writes, Antipholus' 'absence from home is the first step in the flouting of an accepted social ceremony that helps define his identity as respected citizen and respectful husband' (225). As we noted in the introduction to this thesis, traditionally in early modern England, a person had to be the head of a household in order to attain citizenship status (Withington, *Politics* 10). *The Comedy of Errors* deliberately stresses this link between citizenship and household identity, as is evident in Antipholus of Ephesus' own experience in being accepted into the Ephesian community. Although Egeon mentions in the opening scene that neither of his sons was born in Ephesus, we do not discover until the end of the play more about how Antipholus of Ephesus came to be integrated into life there as a highly

respected citizen. We learn that Antipholus fought for the Duke in the war and 'took / Deep scars to save thy [the Duke's] life' (5.1.192-93). As a reward, Antipholus tells us, the Duke gave him Adriana to be his wife. Like his brother, then, when Antipholus of Ephesus first arrived there, he too was a foreigner and a stranger but, by giving him Adriana as his wife, the Duke helps to secure Antipholus' place in the community as a virtuous and worthy citizen.

We also witness the importance of the link between household and citizenship in the case of Antipholus' father, Egeon. When he arrives in Ephesus he is judged by his status as a citizen of an enemy territory and thus condemned to death, despite the fact that he is no 'Merchant of Syracuse' and in fact came to Ephesus in his role as a father. The story of his domestic heartbreak earns him sympathy from the Duke but no exemption. The Duke merely repeats the condition that he can be freed only if someone pays one thousand marks on his behalf, but increases the time allowed for this until 5pm that day. This condition in itself is tied up with familial, domestic and local connections: the Duke commands Egeon 'try all the friends thou hast in Ephesus' (1.1.152). Finding someone who is willing to pay a thousand marks on his behalf would allow Egeon to prove that he has a least some connections to the city and is not a complete stranger. The Duke claims that he cannot do more than this because he cannot go against 'our laws, / my crown, my oath, my dignity' (1.1.142-3). Yet as soon as Egeon is revealed to be the patriarch of a family, the Duke immediately grants Egeon a reprieve, not even accepting the ducats that Antipholus of Ephesus offers to pawn for his father's life. It seems as if Egeon's new found status as a householder can do what his story of domestic tragedy could not: persuade the Duke to go against 'the statute of the town' (1.2.6).

Antipholus of Ephesus, however, despite having himself benefited from it, no longer appreciates the link between being a respectful husband and a

respected citizen. When Dromio of Ephesus accosts a bewildered Antipholus of Syracuse whom he mistakes for his brother to berate him about not coming home for dinner, we see the chaos that Antipholus' absence from home causes: 'the capon burns, the pig falls from the spit / . . . the meat is cold because you come not home' (1.2.44-48). When he does eventually return home to dine, he does so because it is of value and convenience to him to invite Balthazar to dinner, and thus increase his credit and standing with him. The First Merchant reveals at the beginning of the play the importance of dining to business transactions when he refuses Antipholus of Syracuse's invitation to dine because he is invited 'to certain merchants' from whom he hopes to 'make much benefit' (1.2.24-25). Antipholus of Ephesus, then, is far more concerned with his reputation as a respected citizen, rather than a respectful husband, and fails to understand that the two are inextricably linked.

Antipholus of Ephesus only realises the importance of Adriana's domestic labours when he is deprived of them. The climactic moment of the play comes when Adriana inadvertently locks Antipholus of Ephesus out of his own house.[47] With this action, she shatters completely the bond of trust between husband and wife. Mirroring Adriana's earlier interpretation of his refusal to 'come home to dinner' (2.1.60) as an act of infidelity, Antipholus of Ephesus assumes that she locks him out because she 'with harlots feasted in my house' (5.1.205). That he jumps to this conclusion indicates a belief that the only way that women can gain authority in the household is through cuckoldry. Due to the importance of a woman's honour for the reputation of the household, such behaviour represents the epitome of transgression for a wife.

[47] See Cartwright for the different ways in which this scene can be staged.

Shakespeare's key inspiration for the locked-out scene comes from Plautus' *Amphitryon*, in which Amphitryon, unlike Antipholus of Ephesus, really is cuckolded rather than only believing himself to be. The god Jupiter assumes the shape of Amphitryon in order to be able to usurp his place in the household and sleep with his wife. His wife then refuses to let the real Amphitryon enter his own house, as she thinks he is playing a trick on her, with Jupiter-as-Amphitryon having just left. Amphitryon is then further blocked from entering his house by Jupiter himself. The influence of this scene from *Amphitryon* on English drama can also be found in an early English play *Jack Juggler* (1563), where the vice of the play, Jack Juggler, decides to dress as and imitate servant Jenkin Carraway in order to punish him for an unspecified wrong he has done him. As in *The Comedy of Errors*, the centrepiece of this short play is the locked-out scene in which Jack Juggler bars Jenkin Carraway from entering his own master's home by pretending that he is the real Jenkin Carraway.

What is noticeable about both these texts, *Amphitryon* and *Jack Juggler*, is that the locked-out scenes result from, and highlight, deliberate deceit in the plays. The *Menaechmi* too contains many examples of deliberate deceit, for example, when Menaechmus steals both a mantle and a bracelet from his wife. In *The Comedy of Errors*, in contrast, deliberate deceit is almost entirely lacking: most of the confusions of the play result from the innocent mistaking of the two brothers' identities. An act of conscious deception of one person by another means that the trust of only one person is betrayed. The lack of conscious deception in *The Comedy of Errors*, however, means that both Adriana and Antipholus genuinely believe that they have been betrayed by the other: Adriana when Antipholus does not respond to her summons to dinner, and Antipholus when Adriana locks him out the house. As a result, the

consequences of such a betrayal of trust can be seen both from the wife's and from the husband's perspectives rather than just from one or the other. The lack of deception in the play as a whole functions in a similar manner: to let us see how both parties in a transaction respond when they believe their trust has been betrayed.

The shockwaves of Antipholus being locked out from his house are felt throughout the play. The cautionary words of Balthazar when Antipholus tries to break the door down emphasise what a precarious position the reputation of the household is put in through the divide between husband and wife. He warns Antipholus that by drawing attention to his situation he will 'draw within the compass of suspect / Th'unviolated honor of your wife' (3.1.87-88) and must therefore have patience because 'in the stirring passage of the day / A vulgar comment will be made of it' (3.1.99-100), the scandal of which will 'dwell upon your grave when you are dead' (3.1.104). A 'vulgar comment' is invested with great power here: its impact will live on, longer than Antipholus himself. Despite Antipholus' reluctant obedience in not breaking the door down, the scandal of the situation nevertheless follows him. In order to spite his wife, Antipholus decides to give the chain he originally planned to give to Adriana to the Courtesan instead. This action sets in motion several confusions in the play regarding the exchange of money and objects and eventually threatens Antipholus of Ephesus' status as a highly esteemed citizen. Antipholus of Ephesus promises the chain to the Courtesan and in return accepts a ring that she gives him, worth forty ducats. She later meets Antipholus of Syracuse and demands to have either the chain or the ring. When Antipholus of Syracuse, not knowing to what chain or ring she is referring, refuses to give her either, she no longer views Antipholus as trustworthy and decides he must be mad. Significantly, she attributes his

madness not only to his perceived lack of trustworthiness in his deal with her but specifically to the fact that he was locked out of his house:

> The reason that I gather he is mad
> Besides this present instance of his rage,
> Is a mad tale he told today at dinner
> Of his own doors being shut against his entrance.
> Belike his wife, acquainted with his fits,
> On purpose shut the door against his way. (4.3.83-88)

To the courtesan, Antipholus being locked out of his house is a result of the same uncivil and ungentlemanly behaviour she believes he has displayed to her, such that she thinks Adriana 'on purpose shut the door against his way'. She therefore equates the story of his being locked out of his home with loss of credit and reputation and uses it as corroborating evidence for his madness. In order to regain her ring, the Courtesan constructs a tale to tell to Adriana in which she exaggerates Antipholus' madness. In what is the only act of conscious deception in the play, she decides to 'tell his wife that, being lunatic, / He rushed into my house and took perforce / My ring away' (4.3.89-91). Here we see how easily a reputation can be lost once one's image of one's self as trustworthy is destroyed. Antipholus of Ephesus has spent many years building up cognitive trust in Ephesus and yet the one incident of him being locked out his home is enough to almost destroy his reputation. He does not realise how truly he speaks when he proclaims 'this jest [of Adriana locking him out] shall cause me some expense' (3.1.123).

Antipholus' loss of reputation is illustrated firstly by his arrest in the street and secondly by the indignity he must suffer at the hands of Doctor Pinch, who Adriana employs to exorcise her husband once she has heard the Courtesan's tale. Adriana is all too ready to believe the Courtesan's report of her husband's madness; she fetches the doctor before she has even witnessed

her husband's behaviour for herself. Ironically, Doctor Pinch's presence is the cause of Antipholus' uncivil behaviour. Antipholus thinks he was locked out from his home because the doctor usurped him and took his place. When confronted by his wife and the doctor, Antipholus of Ephesus relates his current situation back to his experience at the house earlier that day, railing against Adriana:

> You minion, you, are these your customers?
> Did this companion with the saffron face
> Revel and feast it at my house today,
> Whilst upon me the guilty doors were shut,
> And I denied to enter in my house? (4.4.59-63)

Antipholus addresses Adriana as though she were a courtesan with 'customers' of whom he thinks Doctor Pinch is one, viewing his current situation as a direct consequence of the fact that he was 'denied to enter in my house'. Adriana too then links his loss of reputation to his being locked out when she says, that 'God doth know you dined at home' (4.4.64), where had he remained, she continues, he would have been 'free from these slanders and this open shame' (4.4.66). Adriana inadvertently emphasises that the fact her husband did not dine at home has led to 'these slanders and this open shame'.

Antipholus of Ephesus is then subject to the ultimate humiliation for the head of a household: being bound and locked in a dark room in his own house while his wife takes control. Antipholus of Syracuse, on the other hand, despite being constantly mistaken for his brother, manages to avoid the humiliation that his brother must suffer. The difference in what the brothers encounter in the play reinforces further that the consequences Antipholus of Ephesus faces stem from the breaking of trust between husband and wife that resulted from the doors of his house being shut against him. Antipholus of Syracuse's dining in his brother's place is a divisive moment in the brothers' experience of

Ephesus. Antipholus of Syracuse experiences the town such as it was for his brother before he got locked out of the house, as a trusted and esteemed citizen, while Antipholus of Ephesus has the contrary experience of what it is like living in the Ephesian community once the reputation of one's self and one's household has been compromised through lack of trust.

2.2 Trust between Master and Servant in *The Comedy of Errors*

The relationship of master and servant has a very different dynamic to that of husband and wife. While husband and wife must earn one another's trust, a servant is duty bound to be faithful to his master. Based on the word of the scriptures, servants 'are straightly charged, reverently, and faithfully to obey their bodily masters, mistresses, and dames, in all things which maybe done without offence to God' (Dod and Cleaver, *Godlie Forme* Sig.Aa5^{r}). Moreover, they must 'indevour to doe and procure, to the uttermost of their abilitie, that which may be to their masters, mistresses, and dames honestie, credit, and profit, and that as well when they are absent and out of sight, as when they bee present and looke on' (Dod and Cleaver, *Godlie Forme* Sig.Aa6^{r}). The Dromios in the play are well aware of their situation, as we see when Dromio of Syracuse remarks, having been sent on an errand, 'Thither I must, although against my will; / For servants must their masters' minds fulfil' (4.1.112-113).[48] If the trust between master and servant was broken, however, the consequences could be just as disastrous as that of a betrayal between husband and wife. Mark Burnett and David Evett, among others, have shown that the anxiety surrounding the potential subversion of the master-servant relationship pervades early modern drama.[49]

[48] See Neville 374, for why the Dromios can be considered servants and not slaves.
[49] Burnett 97-109; Evett 133-158. While Evett focuses mainly on Shakespeare, Burnett places more emphasis on non-Shakespearean drama.

The Comedy of Errors, however, reveals the bond of trust between master and servant to be remarkably strong, particularly between Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse. The first action that passes between them exemplifies Antipholus' trust in Dromio, his 'heedful slave' (2.2.2). Antipholus gives a thousand marks to Dromio to deliver to The Centaur, which, in terms of material wealth, represents the biggest act of trust in the play. The value of a thousand marks is emphasised in the previous scene when the Duke declares it as the amount of money required to buy Egeon's life. Dromio himself draws attention to the level of trustworthiness that Antipholus assumes in him by joking that 'many a man would take you at your word / And go indeed, having so good a mean' (1.2.17-18) in answer to Antipholus' command of 'get thee away' (1.2.16). He implies that the money Antipholus has given him is a good enough 'mean' for him to escape his service forever. Antipholus' trust in Dromio is such, that the possibility does not trouble him. His only response is to explain to the merchant that Dromio is 'a trusty villain, sir, that very oft, / When I am dull with care and melancholy, / Lightens my humour with his merry jests' (1.2.19-21). Antipholus of Syracuse encounters Dromio of Ephesus shortly after this exchange, mistaking him for Dromio of Syracuse. When Dromio of Ephesus truthfully claims to know nothing about the money, Antipholus of Syracuse reprimands him: 'We being strangers here, how dar'st thou trust / so great a charge from thine own custody' (1.2.60-61). This response suggests that, had they not been strangers in Ephesus, Antipholus of Syracuse would even have trusted Dromio to deliver 'so great a charge from thine own custody'.

Antipholus and Dromio of Ephesus lack the sense of amicability that we see in the Syracusian pair. We can observe this in the fact that Antipholus of Ephesus is far less inclined to believe his servant than his brother is to believe Dromio of Syracuse. When Antipholus of Syracuse is brought to Adriana's

house for dinner, he accuses Dromio of Syracuse of lying but when Dromio retorts 'I never spake with her in all my life' (2.2.166), Antipholus of Syracuse accepts this. In contrast, although Antipholus of Ephesus is happy to use Dromio of Ephesus as a witness to testify to his activities of the day, he refuses to believe anything he says which does not accord with his own memory. In Act 4, Scene 4, for example, Dromio of Ephesus returns bearing a rope rather than the money that Antipholus of Ephesus expected. Antipholus blocks out his confused protests, insults him as a 'whoreson, senseless villain' (4.4.24) and beats him. David Schalkwyk in *Shakespeare, Love and Service* argues that many master and servant relationships in Shakespeare are based on affective bonds. However, this is not the case, he claims, for the master-servant relationships in *The Comedy of Errors* which 'bear none of the fraught and humanising complexities of reciprocal affection of other servants in the Shakespeare canon' although he concedes that 'its farcical patterning does register the normative ideals of such an attachment in a starker outline' (81). While this is true to an extent for the Ephesian pair, it does not apply to the Syracusian duo whose dependence on one another both in a practical sense and in an emotional sense is more than evident. We must therefore recognise that Shakespeare makes a deliberate choice to portray both pairs differently. By doing so he makes the point that, although a master should be able to take his servant's trustworthiness for granted, reciprocal trust between master and servant is more likely to result from a relationship where affective bonds are present rather than mere obligation. If we compare the two sets of master and servant, we notice that Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse are given much more dialogue in the play than their Ephesian counterparts. Harry Levin tells us that Antipholus of Syracuse speaks 272 lines, while his brother has only 207 lines. Similarly, Dromio of Syracuse has 233 lines and Dromio of Ephesus 162 (129).

Shakespeare therefore puts the audience's focus on the amicable relationship of the Syracusian pair to set up a contrast not only with Antipholus and Dromio of Ephesus but also with the less than amicable relationship between husband and wife.

Trust between master and servant is lost, as it is so often in the play, through the confusion of identities. One way in which the consequences of this loss of trust manifests is through violence. Critics of the play have often noted that violence is endemic in *The Comedy of Errors.* Charles Whitworth, for example, observes that the words 'beat', 'beating' and 'beaten' occur a total of fourteen times in the play, more than any other in the canon (43). Although physical violence impacts on masters as well as servants, the Dromios' complaints about the beatings they face are a constant refrain in the play making it a key and unavoidable part of their existence. In early modern England, violence was an accepted method of regulating the patriarchal order, as long as it was not too excessive, both between men and between men and women (Shepard, *Meanings* 128, 131). The determination of 'excessive', however, was highly variable and depended on 'the reputation of the household involved and the vigilance of neighbours and kin' (Shepard, *Meanings* 137). In the Dromios' case, they receive the brunt of the violence resulting from a breakdown of trust because they act as mediators between the two parties for most of the transactions that occur in the play. Despite the fact that much of the violence suffered by the Dromios takes place in public, no one raises any objections. Violence, at least against servants, is an accepted way of life in Ephesus. Dromio of Ephesus explicitly links the violence meted out by Antipholus of Syracuse to the idea of credit by punning on marks as currency and marks from being beaten when Antipholus of Syracuse mistakes him for his own servant to whom he gave a thousand marks. When Antipholus of Syracuse

asks: 'where is the thousand marks thou hadst of me?' (1.2.81), Dromio responds 'I have some marks of yours upon my pate, / Some of my mistress' marks upon my shoulders, / But not a thousand marks between you both' (1.2.82-84). Dromio is more than aware of his role as a buffer to accept the frustrations caused by the failures and confusions of the system of credit.

Similarly, when the relationship between Antipholus and Adriana breaks down, the Dromios suffer from it, because they must act as intermediaries and therefore receive the violence that Adriana really intends for her husband and vice versa. Dromio of Ephesus finds himself being sent back and forth between husband and wife several times, being beaten each time, leading him to refer to himself as a football that is bounced between them both (2.1.82-5). He knows full well that Adriana will take her annoyance with Antipholus out on him, evidenced in his statement to Antipholus that 'If I return [to the house] I shall be post indeed, / For she will scour your fault upon my pate' (1.2.64-65). The relationship between marriage breakdown and violence is also made explicit in Plautus' *Menaechmi* when Peniculus says to Menaechmus: 'You've had a fall-out with your wife; on that ground am I the more strongly on my guards against you' (1.2.53-54). Eventually, the violence expands to include masters as well as servants. Both Antipholus of Ephesus and Antipholus of Syracuse face violence against their persons either in the form of being arrested and bound in a dark room or in being challenged to a duel and subsequently fleeing to the priory.

In both these cases, in the relationships between husband and wife and master and servant, the play presents us with situations where, when the bonds of trust in the household are broken, the consequences reverberate in the entire community, consequences we can investigate further when we look at the making and breaking of trust in the community.

3. The Making and Breaking of Trust in the Community

Antipholus of Syracuse's description of Ephesus in Act 4, Scene 3 neatly illustrates the extent to which the community is based on trust. In continual wonderment that everyone seems to recognise him, he says:

> There's not a man I meet but doth salute me
> As if I were their well-acquainted friend,
> And everyone doth call me by my name.
> Some tender money to me, some invite me,
> Some other give me thanks for kindnesses.
> Some offer me commodities to buy.
> Even now a tailor call'd me in his shop,
> And show'd me silks that he had bought for me,
> And therewithal took measure of my body. (4.3.1-9)

From Antipholus' words we gain an insight into what life is like in Ephesus as a highly respected citizen 'of very reverend reputation' (5.1.5). His indistinguishable appearance from his brother, and the possession of the same name, allows Antipholus of Syracuse to trade unwittingly on his brother's good credit and reputation. Antipholus recognises that the citizens' offerings to him and their words are manifestations of their trust in him; they offer him money and commodities because, based on his appearance and reputation, they know they can trust him to repay his debts in future. By their actions, they are 'taking measure' of his character just as the tailor literally measures his body. Knowing that he has not done anything to earn this trust, Antipholus of Syracuse is highly unnerved, concluding that 'sure, these are but imaginary wiles, / And Lapland sorcerers inhabit here' (4.3.10-11).

Noticeably, many of the actions Antipholus notes in this speech are connected with mercantile activity: buying, selling and exchanging commodities, all of which symbolise the increased need for trust in a highly mercantile community. The emphasis on mercantile activity, like the emphasis on the

household, is one that Shakespeare himself has brought to the forefront in his adaptation of the *Menaechmi*. Some exchange of money and goods does take place in the *Menaechmi* but mainly at the domestic level. As well as the circulation of the mantle and the bracelet, Menaechmus of Epidamnus talks about the cost of his wife's mantle (1.3.29); Erotium gives Cylindrus, her cook, 3 didrachms to buy provisions (1.4.1); Menaechmus Sosicles gives Cylindrus 1 didrachm to buy 'an unblemished pig' to make a sacrifice (2.2.22) and Erotium gives Menaechmus Sosicles a bracelet to which she wants added an ounce in weight of gold (3.3.1-3); Erotium's maidservant asks Menaechmus Sosicles for pendant earrings, worth two didrachms in weight of gold (3.3.23-4). The only mention of merchants, however, comes in the prologue to the play where we are told that the twins' father was 'a merchant at Syracuse' (13) who took one of the boys with him 'on a large ship with much merchandise' (18).

Unlike in *The Comedy of Errors,* therefore, where Shakespeare uses the opening scene and particularly Egeon's story to introduce both the mercantile and domestic themes that will be prominent in the rest of the play, the merchants in *Menaechmi* remain confined to the prologue. This is reflected in the fact that there is only one mention of credit in the *Menaechmi*. Menaechmus of Epidamnus, exiled from his home by his wife for stealing her mantle to give to Erotium, then finds himself also shut out from his courtesan Erotium's house when he asks her to return the mantle to placate his wife. He moans that:

> She [Erotium] has gone indoors and shut the house. Now I'm regularly barred out; I have neither any credit at home now nor with my mistress. (4.3.29-30)

The credit of which Menaechmus speaks is social credit, predicated on the affective bonds of the household. Unlike in *The Comedy of Errors*, however, it is not linked to the financial credit of the market nor to Menaechmus' reputation

in the wider community but remains firmly confined to the household alone. Similarly in *Amphitryon*, the protagonist worries about the state of his household but never about his own reputation. Menaechmus Sosicles' reveals his lack of concern about his reputation in the wider community when he purposefully pretends to be mad in order to escape from Menaechmus of Epidamnus' wife and father-in-law. In *The Comedy of Errors*, in contrast, madness is imposed upon Antipholus of Ephesus, much to his great concern. The Latin text of Menaechmus' declaration of his lack of credit uses a passive construction for the sentence: *neque domi neque apud amicam mihi iam quicquam creditur*. By ignoring the agency of wife and mistress that we might assign to allow for a more fluent English translation, it emphasises the significance of place in relation to credit. Translated literally, the sentence reads 'Neither at home nor at the house of my mistress is it now credited to me'. The household is here presented as the definite locus of trust, yet Menaechmus of Epidamnus has no concern about the implications of his loss of credit for his reputation. He decides to go to his friends and ask them what he should do, implying that being locked out of not one house but two does not carry the same stigma that it does in *The Comedy of Errors*. Shakespeare's innovation in *Errors* is therefore to link the trust of the household together with wider questions of citizenship by bringing the mercantile community into prominence.

Shakespeare emphasises the high esteem in which Antipholus of Ephesus' fellow merchants hold him, as we can see when Angelo describes him as 'Of credit infinite, highly beloved, / Second to none that lives here in the city. / His word might bear my wealth at any time' (5.1.6-8). Such words are the highest praise that a merchant can receive. Yet within the play itself, we do not witness Antipholus of Ephesus making any particular gestures towards trustworthiness. Noticeably, Angelo speaks these words when Antipholus has

already been arrested for failing to pay for the chain, in response to the Second Merchant's query 'How is the man esteemed here in the city' (5.1.4). We might think, then, that Angelo deliberately inflates Antipholus' reputation to justify his own act of placing his trust in him. While Angelo may be exaggerating slightly for this reason, he not only describes Antipholus of Ephesus as trustworthy but also implies it through his actions. When Angelo gives Antipholus of Syracuse the chain, mistaking him for his brother, and tells him he'll visit him to receive the money later, Antipholus of Syracuse replies 'I pray you, sir, receive the money now, / For fear you ne'er see chain nor money more' (3.2.179-80). Rather than being at all concerned about this proclamation of Antipholus' apparent untrustworthiness, Angelo merely replies 'You are a merry man sir; fare you well' (3.2.181). Angelo's belief in the repute of Antipholus' character is so strong that he has no fear about never receiving the money even when Antipholus himself states that such an occurrence is possible. Angelo's willingness to provide Antipholus of Ephesus with credit despite his request to the contrary illustrates that Antipholus' credit rests on the long-standing cognitive trust he has built up within the community, meaning that it is no longer necessary for him to convey trustworthiness in the same way as a stranger to the town might have to.

No matter how long standing, however, cognitive trust is nevertheless easily broken. The juxtaposition between Act 3, Scene 2, discussed above, where Antipholus of Syracuse's credit is taken for granted, with the following scene in which Antipholus of Ephesus is arrested for failing to live up to his obligations, reveals the highly precarious nature of trust. As soon as Antipholus of Ephesus is perceived to deviate from the behaviour expected of him, his reputation suddenly counts for nothing and he is arrested because Angelo must think of his own reputation in the community. The Second

Merchant stays in Ephesus only because he is waiting to receive his money from Angelo who in turn needs to receive it from Antipholus. Angelo begs Antipholus to 'consider how it stands upon my credit' (4.1.68). The wide-reaching consequences of Angelo not being able to pay his debt are illustrated by the fact that the Second Merchant, and not Angelo, commissions Antipholus' arrest because his 'business cannot brook this dalliance' (4.1.59). The 'chain' of credit between Antipholus, Angelo and the Merchant thus reveals the widespread impact, in a community based on networks of trust, that can result from someone defaulting on their promise, beyond what the defaulter themselves might imagine.

3.1 Trust, the Law and Ephesus as a Self-Governing Community

Like the community of lawyers to whom *The Comedy of Errors* was performed in Gray's Inn in 1594, the Ephesian community is largely self-governing, preferring to rely on their bonds of trust with one another rather than ask the Duke for help, further emphasising the prominence of trust. As it still is today, in sixteenth century England, a contract was 'a transaction which involved the transfer of property and the creation of a debt' (Raffield, '*Comedy*' 211) but the contract could be based on verbal evidence rather than only written. If a debtor failed to honour a contract, the creditor could try to reclaim his losses through an action of debt by providing proof of the contractual agreement. The Ephesians only invoke these laws of contract when they feel their trust has been broken but do not show much regard for issues of law otherwise. We see this, for example, when the First Merchant advises Antipholus of Syracuse how to escape the same punishment as Egeon despite the fact that he too is a merchant from Syracuse. There is an irony in the fact that Egeon is condemned and not Antipholus. Antipholus, unlike his father, does business in Ephesus, while Egeon arrives in the town in his role as a father but is condemned for his

role as a merchant. Moreover, we would have thought that, being a merchant himself, the First Merchant would have more of a vested interest than the Duke in avenging his 'well-dealing countrymen' (1.1.7) who were killed in Syracuse. The First Merchant personally, however, has not experienced the treachery of the Syracusians and therefore sees no need to uphold the law against them.

Significantly, when they suspect a contract has been broken, the main method the Ephesian citizens use to regulate their community is the practice of wager of law, a practice which is rooted in the relation of one household to another. The wager of law is a procedure whereby a defendant in a litigation or debtor suit argues their case by employing eleven acquaintances to act as compurgators who swear to the truth of the defendant's claim (Raffield, '*Comedy*' 217). The practice of wager of law dates back to medieval times and, by the time Shakespeare was writing *The Comedy of Errors*, had mostly fallen out of use, due to the rise of actions of *assumpsit* instead of actions of debt. One of the key ways in which an action of *assumpsit* differed from an action of debt was that an action of *assumpsit* did not allow the defendant to 'wage his law' (Ibbetson 311).[50] Moreover, even in actions of debt, the practice of wager of law became less and less common due to the growing recognition that compurgators could simply be hired for the process and did not have to have any relation to the defendant (Spinosa 374). Rather than proving defendants' honesty, therefore, the practice of wager of law began to be seen as 'tantamount to admitting liability and refusing to pay the debt due' (Ibbetson 313). As a result, by the 1590s, the practice of 'wager of law was already

[50] For more on the rise of actions of *assumpsit* see Zurcher 147-8 and Ibbetson 311-313.

moribund; very few defendants in actions of debt on a contract took advantage of their right to wage their law' (Ibbetson 313).

Yet in *The Comedy of Errors* the practice of wager of law is still seen to be a legitimate one to allow citizens to protest their honesty. Paul Raffield notes that 'a frenetic and distorted version of this practice [of wager of law] is represented in act five of *The Comedy of Errors*' ('*Comedy*' 217) while Lorna Hutson draws our attention to the 'remarkable fact that the whole of Acts 4 and 5 of the *Comedy* are given over to the exchange of passionate, oath-bound testimony of what the senses seem to have perceived' (*Invention* 150). While the practice of wager of law is not shown in full until Acts 4 and 5, the language of witnessing suffuses the entire play: from Antipholus of Syracuse's fear of 'the nimble jugglers that deceive the eye' (1.2.98), to Dromio's quoting of his conversation with Antipholus, '"your meat doth burn", quoth I, "my gold", quoth he' (2.1.63), to Dromio of Ephesus using the marks on his skin to prove to Antipholus of Ephesus that he has been beaten by him in the market and asserting 'I know what I know' (3.1.11) when Antipholus tries to contradict him. Shakespeare therefore makes a deliberate decision to give a prominent place in his play to a legal practice which was becoming obsolete, and to represent it in an anachronistic fashion. He does so because, with its necessity for compurgators, the wager of law as a legitimate practice highlights citizens' reliance on one another and the importance of networks of trust in a community, particularly because neighbours often acted as compurgators for each other. Thomas Powell in *The Attourney's Academy* (1623) shows that this is the case when, describing the practice of wager of law, he says the defendant: 'is to bring in some of his neighbours, or acquaintance, to depose with him' (Sig.S2^{r}). The use of neighbours as compurgators illustrates the necessity for a good relationship between households and again highlights the

relationship between the household and the wider community. The practice of wager of law also underlines the need to be able to perform trustworthiness because eleven people must believe in someone's honesty enough to swear an oath on it or risk perjury. Given their education in law, the audience of Gray's Inn would have been aware of the current debates surrounding contract law and their outcomes. In all probability, they would have recognised Shakespeare's deliberate anachronistic use of the practice of wager of law.

As well as the 'distorted' version of wager of law that Raffield notes in Act 5, we also see several abortive attempts at it previously in the play which serve to illuminate the constructiveness and theatricality of trustworthiness as well as the way the citizens of Ephesus rely on each other for corroboration of their stories. Antipholus of Syracuse highlights the importance of witnesses in determining the truth when he asks Angelo, who is accusing him of denying possession of the very chain he is now wearing, 'who heard me to deny or forswear it' (5.1.25). The first instance of an embodiment of the practice of wager of law comes when Antipholus of Ephesus is reunited with Adriana for the first time since she locked him out the house. When Adriana accuses him in front of Dr. Pinch of not coming home for dinner, in desperation Antipholus of Ephesus turns to Dromio to be his witness and confirm his version of events:

> *Eph. Ant.* Din'd at home? [To Dromio] Thou villain, what sayest thou?
> *Eph. Dro.* Sir, sooth to say, you did not dine at home.
> *Eph. Ant.* Were not my doors locked up and I shut out?
> *Eph. Dro.* Perdie, your doors were locked, and you shut out.
> *Eph Ant*. And did she not herself revile me there?
> *Eph. Dro.* Sans fable, she herself reviled you there.
> *Eph. Ant.* Did not her kitchen-maid rail, taunt, and scorn me?
> *Eph. Dro*. Certes she did. The kitchen-vestal scorned you.
> *Eph. Ant.* And did I not in rage depart from thence?
> *Eph. Dro.* In verity you did; my bones bears witness,
> That since have felt the vigour of his rage. (4.4.67-77)

With Dromio almost repeating his master's words back to him verbatim, this exchange takes on the semblance of an interrogation of a witness who is being asked to verify the details of the case being investigated. Doubt is then cast on Antipholus' witness:

> *Eph. Ant.* Went'st not thou to her for a purse of ducats?
> *Adr.* He came to me, and I delivered it.
> *Luc.* And I am witness with her that she did.
> *Eph. Dro.* God and the rope-maker bear me witness
> That I was sent for nothing but a rope. (4.4.86-90)

Dr Pinch thinks Luciana is the more reliable witness and he thus agrees with Adriana's judgement that Antipholus must be mad. Significantly, this first instance of 'bearing witness' that we see in the play is related to matters of the household rather than of business, highlighting that belief in someone's honesty begins through the recognition of their trustworthy behaviour in the home. Once this procedure of wager of law has taken place, Adriana's story is successfully corroborated and the citizens then decide upon a course of action: to subject Antipholus to treatment by Doctor Pinch. Shakespeare's employment of the specific rhetoric of wager of law in the play, therefore, works to emphasise the ways in which the community of Ephesus would rather regulate itself, based on networks of trust, than involve the Duke, unless absolutely necessary.

3.2 The Priory and the Restoration of Trust

The final scene of the play reinforces the significance of bonds of trust in the household. As well as illustrating the outcomes of a lack of trust and the consequent loss of reputation, it also works to restore trust to the play's relationships. As the play's confusions reach their climax, Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse flee into the priory, to escape being bound and shut in a dark room to cure their suspected madness. When Adriana tries to get in to

the priory to see her husband, Aemilia, the abbess, blocks her entry, stating 'He took this place for sanctuary, / And it shall privilege him from your hands' (5.1.94-95).

The idea of sanctuary dates back to medieval times, when common law stated that an individual might be allowed sanctuary for up to forty days.[51] A site of sanctuary acted as a refuge in which the jurisdiction of the dominant order was suspended. In Elizabethan England, the tradition of sanctuary remained although it became far weaker, due to the introduction of a series of laws in 1529-40, by Henry VIII, severely restricting available sites for sanctuary (C. J. Sommerville 31). Far earlier, in 1278, Edward I passed a law excluding debtors from the right to claim sanctuary and giving the king the right to confiscate the property of those who did try to claim it (Appleby and Dalton 87). Antipholus of Syracuse, however, does not seek sanctuary to escape the debt that has been imposed on him. On the contrary, he is ready to fight 'to prove mine honor and mine honesty' (5.1.30). Rather, his wife's appearance on the scene forces Antipholus and Dromio to look for the nearest house to flee to, driven by the fear of being bound up and taken back to a household that is not theirs.

Noticeably, Adriana deliberately places the priory in dialectic with the household, emphasising that the lack of trust in his household has resulted in Antipholus requiring sanctuary there. When the Abbess first appears on the scene, we might be forgiven for thinking that the debate which follows will be staged in religious terms. As her conversation with Antipholus continues, however, it becomes clear that, in actual fact, the abbess is not much interested in the religious aspects of her charge's life but rather the everyday, domestic

[51] A detailed description of the processes and protocols of sanctuary can be found in Appleby and Dalton, 87-89.

aspects, enquiring after his and Adriana's life together at home: what they eat, when they rest and what leisure they have. Moreover, the abbess' concerns particularly relate to the matter of trust: she presents the priory as a place of refuge from 'the venom clamors of a jealous woman' (5.1.69), clamours which she blames for Antipholus' madness. She explicitly contrasts the priory with the household by emphasising that, unlike his home, the priory is a place where Antipholus will be able to sleep without being 'hindered by your railing', to eat without his meat being 'sauced with thy upbraidings' and to live without his sports being 'hindered by thy brawls' (5.1.71, 73, 77). Her refusal to let Adriana enter the priory creates an inverted reflection of the locked-out scene, in which Adriana herself is now locked out and in which the blame is cast on Adriana rather than Antipholus for the lack of trust in their household.

The one doctrine that Adriana has always accepted is that husband and wife are as one, for better or for worse. When the Abbess refuses to take account even of this well-known doctrine and will not allow Adriana to take Antipholus home, Adriana decides that she must appeal to the Duke for help, the first time in the play that somebody has done so. The Duke is put in the position of arbitrating a conflict between husband and wife, where each accuses the other of broken promises and adultery. He is not able, however, to solve the 'errors' of the play, overwhelmed by contradictory testimony from all sides he can only declare 'I think you all have drunk of Circe's cup' (5.1.270). Here the practice of wager of law fails because all stories can be corroborated to the same extent and the judge, in this case the Duke, is unable to decide which defendant is the more honest.

Instead, the wrongs of the play are put to rights with the revelation of the two sets of brothers and of Aemilia as wife of Egeon and mother of the Antipholi.

It is surely significant that a mother and wife helps to restore order in the play, particularly in the context of the well-known absence of mothers in most of the Shakespearean canon. Aemilia's role as a *dea ex machina* illustrates that a wife and mother is as important to the health of the community as a husband is because without her the community would be left in disarray. The play began with Egeon's narrative of losing his wife, and we come in a full circle when this wife is restored to him, saving his life and explaining the confusion of the day's events. The Abbess' invitation to the Duke to come and hear the stories of the day's events in a 'gossips' feast' (5.1.407) confirms the Duke's role as somewhat of an outsider in the community; he only listens to the stories rather than participating in them. In her remark that 'we shall make full satisfaction' (5.1.401) by discussing the day's events and the various resulting family reunions, the Abbess employs an economic metaphor. By doing so, she echoes the Second Merchant asking Angelo to 'make present satisfaction' (4.1.5) of his debts and indicates that the 'affective bonds of the household' and the 'commercial ties of the marketplace' (J. Slights, 'Householding' 78) remain intertwined.

The Comedy of Errors therefore exemplifies the significant role the household plays in the marketplace and in the commonwealth as the locus of the creation of trust. As such, the play highlights that the behaviour of all members of the community has the potential to impact upon the health of the commonwealth and illustrates in turn that a wide range of people are capable of displaying civic virtue. Moreover, the members of the community take on a greater role in regulating their community than the Duke does, through the means of trust and the laws of contract. In the next chapter, we will continue to explore the themes of credit and trust in *The Merchant of Venice* and discover the

consequences of founding a community on the structures of mercantilism rather than on the structures of the household.

Chapter Two: Configuring Communities of Honour, Trust and Risk in *The Merchant of Venice*

Recent productions of *The Merchant of Venice* have often emphasised the play's commercial aspects, none more so than Rupert Goold's 2011 production, which converts the Venetian setting into a Las Vegas casino and Belmont into a fantasy game show called 'Destiny'.[52] As a place where risk and venture can pay off, and where money plays an integral role in the life of the city, twenty-first century Vegas offers appropriate parallels to sixteenth century Venice where the accumulation of money and wealth played an equally important role.

Due to its proximity to the Levant, early modern Venice was ideally placed for trading between the East and West and as a consequence was the wealthiest sovereign state in Europe. The wealth of the city attracted traders and merchants from all over the globe. As such, Venice became known as 'the common and general market to the whole world' showcasing 'so unmeasurable a quantity of all sorts of merchandise to be brought out of all realms and countries' (Contarini Sig.B^{v}). Accounts of the city were plentifully available in early modern England, many of which placed prime importance on the city's economic role. Lewes Roberts, director of the Levant Company and the East India Company, even claimed, in his *Merchants Mappe of Commerce* (1638), that Venice was an example of a state where 'merchandizing is found to be the School from whence they gather their first principles, and indeed the chief foundation upon which their fabricke of politicall government is raised: the scale by which their counsels are framed,

[52] For reviews of the original 2011 production in the Royal Shakespeare Theatre see Billington and Prescott. For a review of the 2014 rerun in London's Almeida theatre see Taylor.

and the pillars by which the same is seen to be supported and maintained' (Sig.B^{r}, qtd. in Cecchini and Pezzolo 89). Thus merchandising was not only a significant aspect of the way of life in Venice but integral to the city's entire being.

In many ways, Roberts' words echo those of William Gouge in *Of Domesticall Duties,* when he describes the household as 'the school wherein the first principles and grounds of government are learned' (Sig.C2^{v}). Roberts' words therefore also mirror the fact that in *The Merchant of Venice*, the household is displaced from its central place in the commonwealth and replaced with mercantilism, with the result that the nature of credit and trust becomes very different from that which we saw in *The Comedy of Errors*. As with *The Comedy of Errors*, economic readings of *The Merchant of Venice* have become popular in recent years. One of the key founding texts of New Economic criticism, Marc Shell's *Money, Language and Thought* (1982), uses *The Merchant of Venice* as its main exemplar of the way in which literature and economics intersect to demonstrate the 'apparent commensurability (even identity) of men and money' (48). More recently, in Linda Woodbridge's edited collection *Money in the Age of Shakespeare: Essays in New Economic Criticism* (2004), five of the collection's sixteen essays are about *The Merchant of Venice* while Theodore Leinwand, in *Theatre, Finance and Society*, and Lars Engle have also produced important economic readings of the play.[53] These readings tend to focus on conceptions of usury or, alternatively, of capitalism or proto-capitalism in the play.

[53] The essays in Woodbridge's collection focusing on *Merchant* are those by L. Wilson, Spenser, Netzloff, Mentz and Darcy. The only other play examined in the collection to feature in more than one essay is *Measure for Measure*, which both Korda and Nugent write about.

The word *oikonomia*, from which our modern day term 'economics' is derived, was most commonly used in early modern England to refer to the science of household management (Hutson, *Usurer's* 30-41). Yet there have been no economic readings of the play focusing specifically on the household.[54] Similarly, the culture of credit in the play is yet to receive much attention, with two significant exceptions. Jill Ingram in *Idioms of Self-Interest* (2006) devotes a chapter to '*The Merchant of Venice* and the Lexicon of Credit' while Natasha Korda writes insightfully about the important role played by female moneylenders in early modern England's culture of credit and Portia's embodiment of this role in *Merchant*.[55] By linking the discourse of the household specifically to the culture of credit, this chapter interrogates the connection between structures of the household, mercantilism and the community as well as reconsidering the household's economic significance.

We can clearly see that the household is no longer situated as the locus of trust in *The Merchant of Venice* by the fact that none of the Christian merchants have families and the one household we gain sustained insight into, Shylock's, is completely barren of trust. In this commonwealth with merchandising at its core, trustworthiness is no longer the key quality required to gain credit. Rather, the surest way to accumulate credit is to show a willingness to trust in others and to hazard and venture. Hazarding and venturing also feature as significant themes in many early seventeenth century city comedies. Comparing *Eastward Ho!*'s (1605) and *The Alchemist*'s (1610) treatment of these

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[54] Discussions of the household, however, occur in analyses concerned with gender and the different type of bonds in the play. See Drakakis 'Jessica', C. Slights 'Runaway Daughter' and Boose. For the importance of different types of bonds in the play, see Hinely.

[55] See also Hutson *The Usurer's Daughter*. In a much broader argument that encompasses early modern drama as a whole, Hutson discusses the role of credit and trust in the literary portrayals of homosocial relations in the period and the function of women as 'signs of credit' (7) between men.

themes with *The Merchant of Venice*'s will allow us to further examine *Merchant*'s use of them.

Moreover, credit among Christian merchants translates to a very specific conception of honour in *Merchant*: the more risks one is willing to take, the more honourable one is thought to be. Shakespeare explores issues of credit and honour in the play through looking at two very different embodiments of the culture of credit: on the one hand, Antonio exemplifies the values of extreme generosity and willingness to trust, and thus finds himself held in great esteem, while Shylock as a usurer negates the need to trust at all and hoards his money, depriving himself of credit and additionally making himself vulnerable to discredit.

The Christian culture of credit in the play, generated from mercantile principles, is shown to be one of excess and prodigality that, in many ways, directly opposes a culture of credit based on household values of thriftiness. Yet this culture of prodigality is not sustainable. The honourable Christian merchant is shown to have to rely on his antithesis, the usurer, revealing an instability at the heart of mercantile identity in Venice. In the trial scene, Venice itself is interrogated as a locus of trust and we find a similar instability at its core.

We end the play, however, in Belmont where the emphasis is shifted from mercantilism to the household, as Portia and Nerissa attempt to re-educate their husbands about the value of trustworthiness. Scholars have described the final act of the play as 'irrelevant' (Hinely 217), or argued for its relevance only because it shows that the 'structure of exchange . . . characterises both the economic transactions of Venice and love relationships forged at Belmont'

(Newman 19).[56] Yet by ending with a culture of credit based on the household, after revealing the volatility of Venetian mercantile society, Shakespeare both suggests that 'the household offered a means to manage the potentially disruptive possibilities of social and economic change' (Netzloff 68) and indicates some of the complications of such an approach.

1. The Venetian Household

In Venice, we can easily discern that there is no link between the household and trust due to the fact that the household appears to be almost completely absent from the considerations of the Christian merchants. Antonio's reputation is generated entirely from his venturing and transactions in the market place. In fact, the only reference to the household relations of the Christian community in Venice comes from Shylock, in the trial scene, when he highlights the hypocrisy present in the Christians' refusal to give him his 'pound of flesh' when they themselves 'have among you many a purchased slave' (4.1.90). Amanda Bailey notes that slavery, in seventeenth century England, was more of an 'evocative concept', rather than an actual institution, 'in which the slave marked the endpoint of a continuum of mastery and servitude' ('Shylock' 12). Shylock thus deliberately invokes the figure of the slave as an exemplar of a relationship between owners and what they owned to exemplify his claim on Antonio's flesh. By doing so, he also highlights his belief that the relationships of a Christian household are based on obligations rather than trust.

Shylock, unlike Antonio, does have a home and a family but his inability to trust customers in the market place is reflected in his inability to trust the members of his household. Both Jessica and Lancelet make it clear that they

[56] For the classic argument about the relationship between love and economics in the play see J. R. Brown. See also Szatek 327-328.

too feel like slaves in his service and that Shylock's lack of trust drives them from the house. When Gobbo, for example, offers to give a present to Shylock as the master of his son, Lancelet responds:

> My master's a very Jew. Give him a present? Give him a halter! I am famished in his service. (2.2.94-95)

In an example of the animal imagery that runs throughout the play, Lancelet's retort that they may as well give Shylock a halter illustrates that within Shylock's house, Lancelet feels himself to be tethered like an animal, over whom watch must be constantly kept. Lancelet's words also foreshadow the trial scene in which Graziano calls for Shylock to be given 'a halter gratis' (4.1.377). Jessica is allowed even less freedom than Lancelet, such that she thinks 'our house is hell' (2.3.2). In the one scene in the play that takes place inside Shylock's home, he treats Jessica as barely more than a prisoner within it:

> Hear you me, Jessica,
> Lock up my doors, and when you hear the drum
> And the vile squealing of the wry-necked fife
> Clamber not you up to the casements then,
> Nor thrust your head into the public street
> To gaze on Christian fools with varnished faces;
> But stop my house's ears – I mean my casements.
> Let not the sound of shallow fopp'ry enter
> My sober house. (2.5.27-35)

Shylock forbids Jessica from looking out the window as he seems to fear that even the sight of the Christians' 'varnished faces' might contaminate her and, by extension, his house. Grace Tiffany draws our attention to Jessica's name as a reference to a 'jesse', a word referring to the leather strap used to tie a falcon either to its post or to its master (362-364). Tiffany identifies other uses of falcon imagery in Shakespeare, in *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Romeo and Juliet.* Both

these examples refer to relationships between husband and wife rather than father and daughter but the relevance of the image for *Merchant* is shown in Salanio's words, when he discusses Jessica's departure, that 'Shylock, for his own part, knew the bird was fledge, and then it is the complexion of them all to leave the dam' (3.1.24-6). Jessica cannot remain tied to her father forever.

In Shylock's household then, family members reside there out of obligation, resulting in the loss of any real affection or loyalty. Lancelet, rather than Jessica, considers the moral implications of abandoning Shylock. Although Jessica recognises 'what heinous sin is it in me / to be ashamed to be my father's child' (2.3.15-16), her final word on the subject is to state in a pragmatic manner that she might well have learnt from Shylock himself: 'I have a father, you a daughter, lost' (2.5.55). Jessica's abandonment of her father highlights the importance of trust as a reciprocal act. Of Jessica's departure, John Drakakis writes that 'in a society politically committed to the organization of the family as a "commonwealth", as a replication of the order of the state, elopement was tantamount to a form of domestic treason in its capacity to undermine the established hierarchy' ('Jessica' 159). Yet Jessica does not recognise her actions as 'domestic treason' because the trust has not been there for her to betray in the first place.

Moreover, Jessica views herself, as do the other characters in the play, as enacting the role of the prodigal daughter. Her abandonment of Shylock is justified, she believes, because her leaving of her father's household and her marriage to Lorenzo is equated with her conversion to Christianity. We see the equation of the two when Jessica remarks that, if Lorenzo keeps his promise, she shall 'become a Christian, and thy loving wife' (2.3.21), linking the two inextricably together and putting more emphasis on her conversion to Christianity by mentioning it first. When Lancelet teases Jessica that she is

'damned both by father and by mother' (3.5.13-14), Jessica answers 'I shall be saved by my husband; he hath made me a Christian!' (3.5.17-18), exemplifying the advantage and protection she gains through converting to Christianity. Jessica therefore believes that her status as the prodigal daughter exempts her from the charge of 'domestic treason'. The other familial relationship we see in the play is equally devoid of real affection. Upon meeting his old blind father, Lancelet gains much pleasure from tricking him into thinking that his son is dead.[57]

Shylock's speech about his 'sober house' also shows us that rather than domestic concerns directly influencing the marketplace as they did in *The Comedy of Errors*, Shylock deliberately seeks to close his house off from the rest of the (Christian) community and use it as a place of refuge. When he asks Jessica to 'stop my house's ears' and thus anthropomorphises it, he highlights that he thinks of his house as a separate entity from all surrounding it, not even to be infiltrated by the sounds of Christian merriment. Although Shakespeare never directly refers to the Venetian Ghetto in the play, we might see Shylock's household as a microcosm for it.[58] It is only there that he is able to eat, drink and pray in the manner that he wants to.

Yet Shylock's desire to separate himself from all things Christian is not possible because both Jessica and Lancelet are drawn by the allure of the Christian culture of credit and honour. Lancelet is enticed into Bassanio's service, despite the fact that he knows Bassanio to be much poorer than Shylock, because Bassanio 'gives rare new liveries' (2.2.98). Not only will

[57] The relationship of Portia and her father is another important familial relationship in the play, despite the fact her father is dead because 'the will of a living daughter [is] curbed by the will of a dead father' (1.2.23-24). See below, 144.

[58] For a history of the Venetian Jewish Ghetto, see Ravid and Malkiel. For a contemporary description of the Ghetto see Thomas Coryat, *Coryats Crudities* 230-235.

Lancelet get to wear a livery but one that is 'more guarded than his fellows' (2.2.140) signifying that although Bassanio may be poorer than Shylock, his old master, Lancelet himself will have a more honourable position.

Jessica, meanwhile, claims of her father that 'though I am a daughter to his blood / I am not to his manners' (2.3.17-18), a statement she then goes on to prove when she spends 'fourscore ducats' (3.1.91) of her father's money in one night alone. According to Venetian law, a daughter was legally entitled to a dowry from her father and one 'congruent' to the family's wealth (Chojnacki 186). While Jessica may have been within her rights, however, to help herself to her father's ducats, the carefree way in which she spends them seems deliberately calculated to set herself at odds with the thrifty behaviour she has learnt from Shylock. By acting in such a manner, Jessica is adopting the Christian spirit of prodigality and initiating herself into a community where credit and honour comes not only from being trusted but from being willing to trust and to put as much money into circulation as possible. Indeed, Graziano implies that Jessica's willingness to spend extravagantly and give lavishly to others is enough to perform the act of conversion to Christianity in itself. As she is leaving her father's house, Jessica tells Lorenzo and Graziano that 'I will make fast the doors and gild myself / with some more ducats, and be with you straight' (2.6.50-51), to which Graziano immediately responds 'Now, by my hood, a gentle, and no Jew' (2.6.52). Regardless of her marriage to Lorenzo, Jessica's prioritising of the need to 'gild' herself with ducats makes her incipiently Christian.

Moreover, by stealing and trading Leah's ring, Jessica not only aligns herself with Christian prodigality but she also takes the one object that has sentimental value for Shylock and converts it into a mere commodity like any other. When Tubal informs Shylock of Jessica's actions, Shylock responds:

> Thou torturest me, Tubal: it was my turquoise; I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor: I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys. (3.1.100-102)

These lines are remarkable precisely because of their simplicity and because they give us a brief but powerful insight into Shylock's emotional state. In *Shakespeare and Economic Theory*, David Hawkes explains the difference between use-value and exchange-value. The ancient idea of economics, discussed by Aristotle and Xenophon, determines the worth of objects based on their use-value to the *oikos*, the household. As such, the use-value of objects is subjective: what is useful for one person may be useless for another (Hawkes 6). In his *Oeconomicus*, Xenophon argues that 'real value is use-value, so that a man truly owns what he can use' (Hawkes 5). Chrematistics, on the other hand, 'involves the translation of an object's intrinsic use-value into the symbolic terms of artificial exchange' (Hawkes 5) whereby the aim was the accumulation of money. As a usurer and hoarder of money, Shylock normally functions upon the principles of chrematistics and thus focuses on the exchange-value of an object rather than its use-value. By stating that he would not have given away Leah's ring 'for a wilderness of monkeys', Shylock emphasises that, for him and for his household, the ring is the one object whose use-value far exceeds its exchange-value. While for Shylock the use-value of the ring is to be found in the fact that it reminds him of his wife, its exchange value, to the Christian to whom Jessica sells it, is the same as that of a monkey. Shylock's unusual choice of phrase also contains echoes of the 'wilderness' theme that occurs in many stories of the Old Testament in which people either run away from their problems or are forced into exile against their will into spaces of isolation, highlighting that the loss of the ring unmoors Shylock completely from any sense of belonging.

Given their role later in the play, it is significant that the object imbued by Shylock with such sentimental and personal value is a ring. In Belmont, Portia and Nerissa give rings to their husbands as symbols of trustworthiness. Unlike Bassanio and Graziano, however, whom Shylock sneers at derisively ('these be the Christian husbands' (4.1.293)) when their willingness to betray their wives becomes apparent, Shylock sees the true value of such a gift. Ironically, Jessica's act of deceit exposes the one domestic situation in which Shylock recognises the need for trustworthiness: in the relationship between husband and wife. Jessica's thieving of the ring therefore reinforces the fact that her departure destroys completely any sense of familial and domestic identity for Shylock.

In Venice, therefore, the household has no relation to the creation of trustworthiness. As we turn to look at the role of mercantilism in the city, we will see that the most valued quality in Venice is rather a willingness to hazard and to venture. In other words, it is necessary to trust rather than be trusted.

2. Honour, Hazarding and Risk in *The Merchant of Venice* and Early Modern City Comedies

2.1 The Honourable Christian Merchant in *The Merchant of Venice*

In order to sustain its famed wealth, Venice relied on merchants who were willing to venture and to risk their own credit for the sake of the commonwealth. Given the geographical nature of the city, merchants who were willing to trust their wares to the fickle mistress of the sea were particularly valued. In his translation of Gasper Contarini's *The Commonwealth and Governance of Venice* (1599), Lewis Lewkenor describes 'navie and sea matters' as being 'of great estimation and credit' (Sig.F4^{r}) in Venice. The significance of maritime trade to the city is shown in the performance of a ritual that took place each spring on Ascension Day. Contarini describes this

ritual, in which the Doge throws a gold ring into the sea: 'Upon Ascension day, according to the custome of his Predicessors, hee [the Doge] goeth aborde a fine ship curiously trimmed, and set forth, and in company of the Bishop, and other Senators, launcheth out into the Sea, throwing a ring into the same, with expresse words, that hee marrieth the Sea in perpetuall Dominion, and rule' (Sig.Z3^{r}). The fact that the Doge feels the need to 'marry' the sea so that he can be in 'dominion' of it illustrates the extent to which Venice's fortunes could be affected by the temperamental nature of the sea, and the performance of this ritual gave the illusion, at least, that the sea could be controlled with Venice as 'Queen of the Sea'. The figure of the elite patrician merchant in Venice was thus one who sought the honour resulting from successful sea-faring despite the risks it entailed.[59] Morocco, one of Portia's suitors, sums up the ethos surrounding hazarding and venturing in the Venetian mercantile community when he says 'Men that hazard all / Do it in hope of fair advantages' (2.7.18-19).

The concept of 'hazarding' was as important to an English conception of mercantilism as it was to a Venetian one. The image of merchants in the Elizabethan mind was an ambivalent one. On the one hand, merchants were often depicted as embodying the sin of avarice and as being calculating and scheming. Much of this animosity resulted from the fact that merchants were also often moneylenders, lending out their money at an 'extortionate rate of

[59] Although it has been shown that Shakespeare had read Lewkenor's translation of Contarini before writing *Othello* (see McPherson 69-90 and Matheson 123-133), it is not clear whether he had done so before writing *The Merchant of Venice*. Whitfield argues that Shakespeare had access to a preview of Lewkenor's translation (123-133), while Mahood thinks that Shakespeare could have read Donato Gianotti's *Libro della repubblica dei venetiani* (1540) and Contarini together in the same volume in 1591 (13). In any case, Contarini is not the only one to describe the Ascension day ritual, Shakespeare could also have read about it in William Thomas' *The History of Italy* (1549), for example (Sig.Y2^{v}).

interest' (Stevenson 92).[60] On the other hand, merchants' necessity to the prospering of the commonwealth was also recognised. By the latter half of Elizabeth's reign the image of merchant as usurer was in decline and writers often depicted them as 'knights, courtiers, princes' and as 'principal citizens' (Stevenson 96).[61] In his sermon 'On Merchants', given in 1607 to the London Company of Merchants, Daniel Price, chaplain to the sons of James I, defends merchants from one of the criticisms most commonly laid against them: that they thought only of themselves and not of the community. Instead he seeks to emphasise why merchants should be praised due to their willingness to venture and thus risk their own credit, both in terms of reputation and wealth:

> The wise merchant, the true Christian, he seeketh, he taketh pains, he laboreth, he endeavourth to follow hard to the mark . . . no peril, no danger, no cost, no temptation, no opposition can confront him. (Sig. B4^{r}, qtd. in Kaplan 237)

The 'wise merchant' is not fazed by danger because he knows the outcome will be worthwhile not only for himself but also for the commonwealth. By hazarding, merchant adventurers were allowing the circulation of money and commodities to take place which was seen as key to stimulating the country's economy.

The belief in the importance of the circulation of money formed one of the tenets of a political economic system known as mercantilism, which grew in importance throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[62] Underlying

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[60] For a further discussion of the relationship between merchants and usurers see below, 130-31.

[61] See also Leinwand, *City* 21-43 for discussion of depictions of merchants in early modern London.

[62] The term mercantilism has long been a contentious one among economic historians, not least because it was not brought into common currency until the 19th century, by Adam Smith in his *Wealth of Nations* (1776), who coined the term only to order to critique it. Historians have therefore argued that to use the term is to impose a unified theory and system onto a disparate set of texts and writers who would not have seen themselves as

the economic system of mercantilism was the fact that the government and the mercantile classes worked together in order to increase the wealth, and thereby the power, of the country. This view is perhaps best summed up by Edward Misselden in his economic tract *Free Trade, or The Meanes to Make Trade Flourish* (1622) when he says:

> And what has more relation to matters of state, than Commerce of merchants? For when trade flourishes, the King's revenue is augmented, lands and rents improved, navigation is increased, the poor employed. But if trade decay, all these decline with it. (Sig.B2^{r}, qtd. in Grampp 469)

Although the existence of mercantilism proper is thought to have begun in the 1620s with the publication of the work of Misselden and the two other major merchant-theorists, Gerard Malynes, and Thomas Mun, the ideas that they would go on to theorise were already circulating at the time when Shakespeare was writing *The Merchant of Venice* in treatises such as John Brown's *The Marchants Avizo* (1589) and John Mellis' *Brief Instruction and Maner How to Keepe Bookes of Accompts* (1588), albeit with less emphasis on high policy and trading practice (Sullivan 16). The emphasis put by Misselden on 'trade flourishing' correlates with the belief of the mercantilists that 'the economy required a certain amount of money in circulation to remain healthy' (Wennerlind 75). Thus it was thought that 'a man accumulated money in order to invest it and in investing circulated it' (Hinton 282). As such, the English mercantilists thought of money as 'energy', as being that 'which imparted motion' (Hinton

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belonging to the same school of thought (Harris 3). Swedish economic historian, Eli Hecksher, however, argues that mercantilism is nevertheless a useful instrumental concept if we think about it less as a system or a structure and more as a nexus of ideas and discourse surrounding the idea of trade in the early modern period. For a detailed discussion of the debate surrounding the use of the word mercantilism see Lars Magnusson, *Mercantilism: The Shaping of an Economic Language* (1994) and, more recently, *The Political Economy of Mercantilism* (2015). See also Phillip J. Stern and Carl Wennerlind's introduction to *Mercantilism Reimagined*.

282) to the economy, resulting in an influx of wealth which would benefit the entire commonwealth. Hinton quotes an apt phrase of Francis Bacon to describe this phenomenon: 'money is like muck, not good unless it be spread' (282).

Noticeably, this need to keep money in circulation is also referred to in the Bible. In his discussion of money as transformative and its role in *Merchant*, Richard Harp references a parable from the Bible which reveals the Christian attitude towards the circulation of money:

> According to the Biblical parable of the talents, money is properly used when it is invested and brings forth a good return, not when it is hoarded or buried and kept back from supporting good enterprises. In the parable Jesus tells of the master who rewards his two servants who double the money he gives them but takes away the single talent hoarded by a third servant who feared his master's wrath if he lost it in business. The master gives that servant's talent to one of those who had made a profit. The moral given by Jesus is, "For everyone who has will be given more, till he has enough and to spare; and everyone who has nothing will forfeit even what he has" (Matthew 25:30). (38)[63]

In the parable, the participants who invest their talents are rewarded for their contribution to the commonwealth through their belief in good enterprises as well as in divine providence. Similarly, in the parable of the prodigal son, which is invoked several times in the play,[64] the prodigal son is rewarded for his belief in divine providence and his own abilities as well as in the forgiveness of his father. These biblical references in the play show that the 'wise merchant' who was willing to believe in risk-taking and in the forgiveness of his creditors, as Bassanio does, was also a 'true Christian'.

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[63] Lim also points out the relevance of the parable of the talents to the play (377).

[64] For a discussion of the use of the prodigal son parable in the play, see McLean, Pastoor and Rosenheim.

In addition to emphasising the need to praise merchants due to their willingness to risk all, in his sermon Price also defends merchants by claiming that in fact many of them should be lauded for their charitableness. He gives the example of Apolonius 'who having long used merchandise at the last became a physician of the poor and needy and bestowing all his time and store in providing necessities for poor, aged, lame, blind people' (Sig.C2^{r}). He stresses several times that there is no 'trade more honourable than the marchant', particularly one who is a 'wise diligent, seeking, finding, buying, selling, exchanging marchant' (Sig.A2^{r}). Similarly in *The Merchant of Venice* Shakespeare combines the need to venture and to hazard with these Christian ideals of charity and generosity.[65] Shylock explicitly links Antonio's generosity with his religion when he says that Antonio 'was wont to lend money for a Christian / courtesy' (3.1.40-41). Together, these ideals form the set of common values upon which the Christian community in the play functions.

The display of these values in the play gains not only credit, but honour which takes on particular importance in the Christian community. Bassanio makes clear the link between honour and generosity, when he says of Antonio:

> The dearest friend to me, the kindest man
> The best-conditioned and unwearied spirit

[65] There have been several discussions of the motifs of hazarding and venturing in the play. In her chapter on 'Commercial Risk as Romance in Early Modern City Comedy', Anne-Julia Zwierlein looks at what she calls 'the three basic life plots' of early modern city comedy: the plot of adventure, the plot of roguery and the plot of increase (77-78). She discusses *The Merchant of Venice* in relation to the plot of adventure arguing that 'Bassanio would be recognisable to Shakespeare's audience as an amateur adventurer who, although operating within the networks of early modern capitalism, romanticises his endeavours in accordance with an older, heroic code' (81). MacInnes investigates the motif of risk in the play in relation to the rise of insurance in early modern England, while Holmer and Lewalski (329) discuss the theological value of venturing. See also Leinwand, *Theatre* 110-139. None of these readings of hazard and venturing in the play link it to the idea of the need for the circulation of money nor oppose it with the household value of thriftiness.

> In doing courtesies, and one in whom
> The ancient Roman honour more appears
> Than any that draws breath in Italy. (3.2.290-294)

Bassanio suggests that Antonio possesses the ancient Roman honour because he is 'the best-conditioned and unwearied spirit / in doing courtesies'. The 'ancient Roman honour' is a concept much discussed by Cicero in his *De Officiis* and Cicero too makes the link between honour and generosity:

> There is nothing so characteristic of narrowness and littleness of soul as the love of riches; and there is nothing more honourable and noble than to be indifferent to money, if one does not possess it, and to devote it to beneficence and liberality, if one does possess it. (1.68)

As well as equating honour with generosity, Cicero states the dichotomy that *The Merchant of Venice* examines: between one who has a 'love of riches' and one who is devoted to 'beneficence and liberality'. The virtue of liberality was one much written about by the ancients. Book IV of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, dealing with 'other moral virtues', following on from the treatment of 'moral goodness' and 'moral responsibility', begins with a detailed discussion of liberality, which is defined in the title of the first chapter as 'the right attitude towards money' (4.1 82).[66] The liberal man is he who possesses virtue in the giving of money because 'the use of money is considered to exist in spending and giving; receiving and keeping it are more a matter of acquisition' (4.1.1120a8-10 83). As such, 'of those who are called virtuous the liberal are probably the best liked, because they are helpful; and their help consists in

[66] For the importance of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* in particular to political and economic thought in early modern England see Turner, 'Problem' 416. We know that Shakespeare was familiar with the *Nicomachean Ethics* because he makes specific reference to it in the opening scene of *The Taming of the Shrew* when Lucentio tells Tranio that he wishes to go to Padua to aid him in his study of 'Virtue and that part of philosophy / […] that treats of happiness / By virtue, specially to be achieved' (1.1.18-20) (Elton 332). All quotations from the *Nicomachean Ethics* in this thesis are taken from Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics* trans. J. A. K. Thomson.

giving' (4.1.1120a21-23 83). We can immediately recognise many traits of Aristotle's liberal man in Antonio, particularly when he writes that 'it is especially characteristic of the liberal man to carry giving too far, so as to leave himself less than his due; because it is in the nature of the liberal man not to regard his own interest' (4.1.1120b4-7 84). This describes exactly the way Antonio behaves in his dealing with Bassanio. The division between one who has a 'love of riches' and one who possesses liberality, is, of course, complicated in the play by religious difference. As a Jew, few legal professions were open to Shylock other than usury. In the stereotypical characterisation of Jews in the early modern period, love of money was thought to be an innate Jewish quality (Shell 62), meaning that they were automatically excluded from any Ciceronian or 'ancient Roman' conception of honour. We ought also to note that this dichotomy is not as clear-cut as it initially seems: Antonio too has a 'love of riches', because his riches are what allow him to behave generously and act as a liberal man in the first place. The difference, then, between Antonio and Shylock, and between having honour and not having honour, is in what they do with their riches.

The significant place of honour in Venetian society is conveyed through Antonio's behaviour and specifically through the way in which he decides to give out credit. In many ways, Antonio is the epitome of the honourable Christian merchant who embraces the culture of charity and trust almost to the point of recklessness. When Bassanio requests money from Antonio for an as-yet-unspecified venture, Antonio responds:

> I pray you, good Bassanio, let me know it,
> And if it stand, as you yourself still do,
> Within the eye of honour, be assured
> My purse, my person, my extremest means
> Lie all unlocked to your occasions. (1.1.135-139)

Bassanio does not hide the fact that he and his quest for Portia are far from being a risk-free investment: by shooting a second arrow after the first, he may find both but it is equally likely that he may find neither. Critics have long speculated that Antonio's generosity towards Bassanio is because he loves him or because he feels the need to act as a surrogate father towards him.[67] No matter his reasons for lending the money to Bassanio, Antonio is first and foremost concerned with the honour of the venture rather than the risk. Moreover, by assuring Bassanio that he himself still stands 'within the eye of honour', Antonio expresses the view that honour comes not from a reputation for thriftiness and good money management, as Bassanio possesses neither of these qualities, but from a willingness to venture. Bassanio makes an attempt to frame his request for money from Antonio in terms of thriftiness when he says 'I have a mind presages me such thrift' (1.1.175) but only after Antonio has already agreed to give him everything he has.

We thus see here a consequence of the Venetian commonwealth being based on merchandising principles rather than those of the household. While thriftiness is held to be a key value in terms of the household, in Venice this quality is not important. In fact Bassanio's behaviour fits well the description of a bad, unthrifty husband that we referred to in the previous chapter, as one 'who spends his meanes upon women, throwes it away at play, wastes it in eating and drinking, and prodigally consumes it in pride of apparell, and other vices of like excesse' (Aleman Sig.Yy8^{r}).[68] However, in Venice, Bassanio's

[67] For readings of Antonio's love for Bassanio as homosexual see e.g. Auden 218-237; Sinfield; Midgley; S. Patterson. For Antonio as a surrogate father, see Tennenhouse 'Counterfeit' 200; Fortin 263.

[68] In *Shakespeare's Domestic Economies,* Natasha Korda writes that thriftiness was the responsibility of the wife (67). While this may be so in terms of management of goods within the household, thriftiness was also an important quality in husbands in terms of controlling unnecessary spending, particularly with regards to drinking and gambling as this quotation

behaviour is not badly regarded because he is putting money into circulation and, as we have already seen above, the more money in circulation, the more productive the economy. Given the city's income from taxes levied on incoming and outgoing goods, Venice in particular relied on the investment of money in exports and imports and the circulation of these commodities. [69] This required a certain level of liquidity which credit, rather than money in the form of bullion, allows. Lars Engle notes of the opening scene that 'it is interesting that they [Antonio and Bassanio] need to enquire "where money is", suggesting, as it does, that all Venice may, like Antonio and Bassanio, have problems with liquidity' (26).

Thus, thriftiness is instead given negative connotations and is associated mainly with Shylock whose attitude towards daily life is strongly influenced by an outlook of thriftiness, as we see when he tells Jessica, 'Fast bind, fast find, / A proverb never stale in thrifty mind' (2.5.52-53). Of the six mentions of thrift in the play, four of the uses occur in the words of Shylock, the first example of which makes clear Antonio's disapproving view of thrift. Shylock complains that Antonio 'rails […] on me, my bargains, and my well-won thrift, / Which he calls interest' (1.3.42-45). Although interest was legally recognised as being very different from usury, in that it provided compensation for the losses sustained when the loan was not paid back on time, rather than charging for

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from Aleman illuminates. For the importance of thriftiness as a quality in husbands, see Shepard, *Meaning of Manhood* 84-86.

[69] William Thomas in *The History of Venice* notes the extreme wealth that Venice gains from taxes: 'As I have been crediblie enformed by some gentilmen Venetians, that have had to dooe therin, they leavey of theyr subjectes little lesse than 4 millions of golde by the yeere, whiche (after our olde reckenyng) amounteth to the summe of tenne hundred thousande poundes sterlyng. A thyng rather to be wondred at than beleeved, consideryng they reyse it not upon landes, but upon customes after so extreme a sorte, that it would make any honest herte sorowfull to heare it. For there is not a graine of corne, a spoonefull of wine, a corne of salte, egge, byrde, beast, foule, or fisshe bought or solde, that paieth not a certaine custome' (76).

the use of the money itself, early modern people often confused the two, as have several critics of the play (Cohen 769; Garrett 34-5).[70] Antonio is doing exactly this, conflating the idea of interest with usury, when he uses the word interest in a derogatory fashion here. Shylock, on the other hand, thinks 'thrift is blessing, if men steal it not' (1.3.84), inadvertently foreshadowing that by the end of the play both his daughter and his possessions will have been taken from him.[71] Given this connection between thrift and interest, the Christians pride themselves on being 'unthrift' as when Lorenzo describes himself to Jessica as being an 'unthrift love' (5.1.16). Bassanio could well use the same words to describe himself to Portia. If Bassanio is excessive in his spending of money, however, Antonio is similarly excessive in his giving of trust. He is more than happy for his credit to be 'racked even to the uttermost' (1.1.181) and reprimands Bassanio 'out of doubt you do me now more wrong / In making question of my uttermost / Than if you had made waste of all I had' (1.1.155-57). For Antonio, then, the honour that comes from lending to Bassanio is worth the risk that it might bankrupt him and destroy his credit.

As in *The Comedy of Errors,* we are shown in *The Merchant of Venice* that honour can be conveyed both through appearance and through behaviour. The words of Arragon, one of Portia's suitors, emphasise that honour is not always given to those whom it should be:

> Let none presume
> To wear an undeserved dignity.
> O that estates, degrees, and offices

[70] Amanda Bailey argues that critics of the play have also confused usury with debt ('Shylock' 6).

[71] The context for Shylock's statement that 'thrift is blessing' is the story of Jacob and Laban from the Old Testament, which Shylock recounts and ends with these words. For a discussion of the importance of this story to the play's treatment of usury, see Shell 48-55.

> Were not derived corruptly, and that clear honour
> Were purchased by the merit of the wearer! (2.9.38-42)

Arragon's description of honour as something that can be worn immediately indicates that it is possible to perform the possession of it. His use of a commercial metaphor to speak about honour being 'purchased by the merit of the wearer' ironically highlights that honour can also be bought, as Bassanio has done. The casket test itself is designed to see through the false assumption of honour and to be able to judge a man's true 'value' (2.7.25). The riddles of the casket test are phrased in such a manner so as to interrogate both the suitors' valuing of their own selves as well as of Portia and are a lesson not to trust in appearances. It is then both ironic and entirely suitable that Bassanio triumphs in the casket test. Ironic because his 'value' is borrowed from Antonio and he himself is therefore deceiving with appearances, yet this also makes him suitable because he recognises the disparity that can exist between appearance and reality. Indeed, Bassanio is highly aware of the importance of behaviour in the securing of his fortunes with Portia. When Graziano requests to come with him, Bassanio cautions him:

> But hear thee Graziano,
> Thou art too wild, too rude and bold of voice-
> Parts that become thee happily enough
> And in such eyes as ours appear not faults.
> But where thou art not known, why there they show
> Something too liberal. Pray thee, take pain
> To allay with some cold drops of modesty
> Thy skipping spirit, lest through thy wild behaviour
> I be misconstered in the place I go to
> And lose my hopes. (2.2.161-170)

Bassanio acknowledges that the 'observance of civility' (2.2.176) is of the utmost importance in conveying honour, especially to strangers. Shortly afterwards, Bassanio asks Graziano 'to put on / your boldest suit of mirth'

(2.2.182-83) for the entertainment in Venice that evening, employing the same clothing metaphor as Arragon does later and highlighting his opinion that behaviour can and should be changed according to the situation. Bassanio also recognises that behaviour which is appropriate in Venice 'and in eyes such as ours appear not faults' may not necessarily be appropriate in Belmont. This difference in appropriate behaviour anticipates the fact that Belmont operates on different principles from Venice and that the culture of credit there may operate differently as well, an idea we will return to below.

2.2 Themes of Hazard and Venturing in Early Modern City Comedies

We can learn more about the significance of *The Merchant of Venice*'s portrayal of honour by turning to the theatrical context of early modern city comedies. Although *The Merchant of Venice* was written almost a decade before the rise of the city comedy in the early Jacobean period, it nevertheless anticipates the themes of credit, honour, hazard and risk which Shakespeare's contemporaries prominently examine in the city comedies. Their interpretation of these themes can help us shed light on Shakespeare's. Chapman, Jonson, and Marston's *Eastward Ho!* (1605), for example, deals with many of the same themes as *The Merchant of Venice* but approaches them from the satirical perspective of the city comedy genre. Just as Shakespeare presents us with two different attitudes towards the culture of credit, in the characters of Antonio and Shylock, so too do Chapman, Jonson and Marston in *Eastward Ho!* through the characters of Golding and Quicksilver. Golding and Quicksilver are both apprentices of Touchstone, the goldsmith, and he explicitly places them in binary opposition with one another with regards to their attitude towards honour and thriftiness. While Quicksilver is 'of a boundless prodigality' (1.1.74), Golding is 'of a most hopeful industry'

(1.1.74). [72] Touchstone, as his name suggests, is the moral and ethical touchstone of the play and the different ways in which he treats his apprentices makes clear which behaviour he endorses and which he condemns. Addressing them both, he says:

> Golding, my utmost care's for thee, and only trust in thee, look to the shop. As for you, Master Quicksilver, think of husks, for thy course is running directly to the prodigal's hog's trough. (1.1.86-89)

Here, Quicksilver, like Bassanio, is described as 'prodigal'. However, rather than allowing his credit to be 'racked even to the uttermost' (1.1.181), as Antonio does for Bassanio, Touchstone, in a reference to the biblical parable of the prodigal son, warns Quicksilver that he could soon find himself with nothing but husks. As a substance, quicksilver was known for its ability to move extremely rapidly and thus Touchstone's choice of words that 'thy course is running directly' is highly appropriate, signifying that his wayward apprentice could soon find himself descending the social ranks due to his lack of ability to control his spending but also that it is possible for him to move away again from the 'prodigal hog's trough' by employing the correct behaviour. Maren Donley argues that this is in fact what Quicksilver does at the end of the play in his repentance: he performs the required virtues of a merchant in order to be reaccepted into the mercantile community (26).

Golding, on the other hand, who embodies the principal of thriftiness, unlike Quicksilver, earns Touchstone's 'utmost care' and trust from the beginning. If Quicksilver finds his fortunes descending towards the 'hog's trough', Golding's fortunes are on the ascent: he first marries Touchstone's daughter and then, with almost unbelievable speed, soars through the civic ranks to

[72] All quotations from *Eastward Ho!* are taken from James Knowles ed. *The Roaring Girl and Other City Comedies*.

become the alderman's deputy. Touchstone states unequivocally that the rise in Golding's fortune is due to his thrifty behaviour when he says:

> Ta'en into the livery of his company, the first day of his freedom? Now, not a week married, chosen commoner? An alderman's deputy in a day? Note but the reward of thy thrifty course. (4.2.46-48)

The exaggerated nature of Golding's success suggests that Chapman, Jonson and Marston are holding the extremely virtuous nature of Golding's character up to ridicule. If Golding's willing embrace of a 'thrifty course', however, is satirised, then the acts of adventuring and hazarding in the play are even more so.[73] In a hastily conceived get-rich-quick-scheme, Quicksilver and Sir Petronel Flash, with the backing of Security, the usurer in the play, decide to embark on a voyage to Virginia. They choose Virginia in particular because they wish that 'Virginian gold were in our purses' (3.2.325). The idea for the voyage is Security's, providing him as it does with the perfect opportunity to put both Quicksilver and Sir Petronel in his debt. Quicksilver is at first reluctant to agree to the plan, declaring:

> I shall be a merchant, forsooth! Trust my estate in a wooden trough as he does? What are these ships but tennis balls for the winds to play withal? Tossed from one wave to another . . . sometimes struck under the wide hazard, and farewell Master Merchant. (2.2.57-62)

Quicksilver recognises the inherent risk of the voyage Security is proposing, knowing full well that he may not even survive it. He thinks of the ships as no more than 'wooden troughs' which are entirely at the mercy of the winds, echoing ominously Touchstone's previous reference to 'hog's troughs' and the future that Quicksilver could face if he loses all on this voyage. Despite his

[73] The exact nature of the play's parodic qualities and the target(s) of its satire is a subject that has been much debated among recent commentators on the play. See Leinwand *City*, Sullivan, J. Ingram and Kay.

accurate assessment of the risks involved, Quicksilver proves to be very easily persuaded to completely disregard them and agree to the voyage. All Security has to do is flatter him by saying he has the 'wit' required for such a voyage and remark:

> Who would not sell away competent certainties, to purchase, with any danger, excellent uncertainties? Your true knight venturer ever does it. (2.2.147-49)

Security professes the view that the Christian community of *The Merchant of Venice* would agree with: that the honour accorded to a 'true knight venturer' is worth the danger entailed. He does so, however, ironically, as the failure of the voyage would work in his favour. Quicksilver is thus persuaded by the perceived honour that Security attaches to the idea of venturing but this honour fails completely to come to fruition during the voyage itself. Utterly lacking any kind of maritime or navigational skills, not to mention common sense, the group drunkenly decide to set out on their voyage in the middle of a storm, despite being warned not to. Consequently, they do not even manage to make it out of London, ending up washed up on the shores of the Isle of Dogs. Not comprehending the extent of their failure, Quicksilver and Sir Petronel suppose themselves to be in France, with the result that they attempt to speak to their own countrymen in broken French. The outcome of the voyage could hardly be more disastrous or more humiliating for its participants. Chapman, Jonson and Marston reveal the act of venturing as one which is undertaken only by those who are too foolish to know better and who lust after money but do not want to earn it by honest labour. They therefore participate in the common depiction of merchants in the city comedies as 'greedy or ambitious, deceitful or foolish' (Leinwand, *City* 23). Although both Touchstone and Golding are also subject to the play's satiric spotlight, they are nevertheless implicitly vindicated at the end of the play due to the fact that the

adventurers land in jail and are only released thanks to the good will of Golding, the 'thrifty' apprentice. As such, *Eastward Ho* presents us with a reversal of the values of the Christian community in *The Merchant of Venice*. In *Eastward Ho*, there is little honour attached, it seems, to being a merchant and, if earned at all, it is earned through thrifty behaviour, not through venturing.

Similarly, Jonson's *The Alchemist* (1610) both represents the need for the circulation of commodities and parodies it through the activities of Face, Subtle and Dol. In accordance with the central conceit of alchemy in the play, the trio in their 'venture tripartite' (1.1.135) pretend to transform worthless materials into valuable ones. They not only transform base metal into gold but also Dol, a prostitute, into the sister of an aristocrat. By so doing, they cozen their customers and emphasise the potential danger of putting into circulation spurious commodities. An excessive desire for commodities is also ridiculed, particularly through the character of Mammon who fantasises about all that he will be able to buy, once he has transformed all his possessions into gold:

> My meat shall all come in, in Indian shells,
> Dishes of agat set in gold, and studded
> With emeralds, sapphires, hyacinths, and rubies.
> The tongues of carps, dormice, and camels' heels,
> Boil'd in the spirit of sol, and dissolv'd pearl,
> Apicius' diet, 'gainst the epilepsy:
> And I will eat these broths with spoons of amber,
> Headed with diamond and carbuncle. (2.2.72-79)[74]

Mammon dreams of buying an excess of exotic and precious items with his new-found riches. He has no hesitations about buying them with gold that used to be base metal, despite the fact that putting false money into circulation could eventually lead to inflation. That these items are all to do with food and

[74] All quotations from *The Alchemist* are taken from Ben Jonson, *The Alchemist and Other Plays* ed. Gordon Campbell.

eating symbolises the greed and insatiable appetite that accompanies consumption both in a literal and metaphoric sense and mocks those like Mammon who are unable to control their desires. Like *Eastward Ho*, then, *The Alchemist* also satirises the values held by the Christian community in *The Merchant of Venice*. This is, at least in part, to do with the conventions of genre. The comic value of the city comedies comes from their ironic depiction of the same conventions that are romanticised in a romantic comedy such as *The Merchant of Venice*. Yet we might also take note of the fact that both *Eastward Ho* and *The Alchemist* situate the culture of credit in relation to the household. The entire action of *Eastward Ho* follows the activities of the members of the Touchstone household while in *The Alchemist* the house itself is a central constituent of the business enterprise that would not be able to function without the house as its base. In fact, as Ian Donaldson notes, the entire action of the play, with the exception of some scenes in Act 5, takes place inside the household (74). Donaldson argues that Lovewit's house is a 'magic' one which is 'capable of becoming whatever its occupants and visitors most wish it to become' (82), meaning that the house is essential to facilitating the action of the play.[75] The trio themselves recognise the necessity of the household to their scheming as we see when Face declares 'The credit of our house too is engaged' (4.3.72). The significance of household values in *Eastward Ho* and *The Alchemist* results in a greater emphasis on thriftiness and the regulation of the circulation of commodities in comparison to *The Merchant of Venice*, in which the household has been displaced from its central role. Comparing *Merchant* with these later city comedies therefore highlights the dominant and all-consuming

[75] See also Dustagheer, 93 for a discussion of the central role of the household in the play in relation to the space of Blackfriars theatre.

nature of the mercantilism in Shakespeare's Venice and stresses the uniqueness of the correlation between venturing and honour in the play.

3. Usury and the Discrediting of Shylock

As one who practices usury, Shylock refuses to venture and therefore embodies an entirely contrasting attitude towards mercantilism to that of Antonio. A law passed in 1571 allowed usurers to charge up to ten percent in interest and it was an inescapable fact that usury was practiced by the church, state and much of the populace (Hawkes, *Culture* 24-25). The playhouses themselves were an act of venturing, dependant on usury for their original capital, without which they would not have been able to succeed.[76] Many reasons were cited against the practice of usury: it went against the Christian ideal of charity, it advocated self-interestedness and led to increased anxiety about social mobility (Cerasano, *Merchant* 37), to name a few. Most significantly for our discussion of *The Merchant of Venice* is the fact that usury negated the necessity to risk or 'hazard all'. A usurer was not thought to be worthy of the money they earned because they had not risked anything to get it, as George Whetstone emphasises in his *A Mirour for Magestrates* (1584):

> I must here digresse from the prodigalitie of the gentleman, unto the covetousnesse and usurie, I can not properly say of the Citizen, although he dwelleth in the Citie: for the true Citizen (wherof London hath plentie) liveth upon his trade, be he an adventurer abroade, or a mecanicall crafts man at home. But these shames of good Citizens tradeth but to a dycing house, or at the furthest

[76] For example, according to Cuthbert Burbage, son of Richard Burbage, 'The Theater hee [Richard] built with many Hundred poundes taken up at interest', and the Globe was built 'with more summes of money taken up at interest, which lay heavy on us many yeeres'. Quoted in E. K. Chambers, 65–66. See W. Ingram 316 for further discussion of the ways in which the building of some of the London playhouses was made possible by the 1571 statue on usury.

> travaileth to a bowling alley, and with ease & safetie getteth wealth as fast as the other doe with great hazard and travell. (Sig.Ii^{v})

What is interesting here is that not only does Whetstone view accumulating wealth with 'ease & safetie' as shameful but also links this to good citizenship: a 'true citizen' is one who 'liveth upon his trade' and usually this trade involves a hazard. As such usury is considered a 'lazie trade' because it allows money to 'lie still' instead of being 'imployed upon merchandizing; which is the *Vena Porta* of Wealth in a State' (Sig.Hh4^{r}-Ii^{v}), as Francis Bacon describes it in his essay 'Of Usurie'. Bacon employs a corporeal metaphor in which wealth is the blood which flows through the body of the commonwealth. It is only able to do so, however, if it is carried in the veins of merchandising. We thus return to the idea of the necessity to the commonwealth of money being allowed to circulate, which it is unable to do if being hoarded by usurers rather than being 'hazarded'. Usury is specifically derided for its lack of hazarding by Thomas Wilson in his *A Christian Dictionary* (1612) when he concedes that 'there are three cases wherein encrease may bee taken by a lender without danger of Usury', one of which is:

> When the Lender is content to hazard the principall, and to beare part of the losse, if any fal to the borrower, without his owne default. Heere he lawfully may take part of the gain which commeth by good meanes. (Sig.Ll2^{v})

Thus, moneylending in itself is not hated but only that in which there is no risk to the lender. Noticeably, in *The Merchant of Venice*, Shylock does not charge interest in the usurious sense on his loan to Antonio: if Antonio were to return the loan on time, he would only have to pay back three thousand ducats, the amount that he initially borrowed. Nevertheless, by asking for a forfeit, Shylock does not 'hazard the principall' because either he will receive back the principal in full or he will gain something else, in this case a 'pound of flesh',

which was of his own choosing. Shylock's unwillingness to 'hazard the principall' in the play means that he finds himself excluded from the culture of credit and honour cultivated by the Christians.

The difference between the Christian merchant's and the Jewish usurer's attitude towards mercantilism is clear to see from the language each adopts. While Salarino and Salanio speak of the act of venturing in richly poetic terms and thus seek to imbue the act of venturing itself with a sense of poeticism, Shylock speaks of it in far more rational terms in a similar manner to the way we have seen Quicksilver do in *Eastward Ho!*. When seeking to reassure Antonio that his sadness is not out of the ordinary, Salarino and Salanio describe Antonio's ship as a 'gentle vessel' (1.1.32) which, if damaged by dangerous rocks, 'would scatter all her spices on the stream' (1.1.33) and 'enrobe the roaring waters' (1.1.34) with silks. In employing such romanticised language, Salarino and Salanio echo early modern mercantilist writings in which 'the language of romance is a recurrent feature' (Harris 9), especially with regards to ideas of hazarding and venturing. Shylock, in contrast, thinks to himself: 'Ships are but boards, sailors but men; there be land rats and water rats, water thieves and land thieves – I mean pirates. And then there is the peril of the waters, winds, and rocks' (1.3.19-22). While Salarino and Salanio seem to express a longing to be in Antonio's situation themselves, constantly referring to how they themselves would feel if they were in his shoes, Shylock's portrayal of venturing depicts it as more foolish than honourable. Shylock later confirms his estimation of venturing and trusting as a foolish pursuit when he sees Antonio on his way to jail and addresses him with the remark 'this is the fool that lends out money gratis' (3.3.2).

Yet the division between merchant and usurer is not as clear as the language of the play would suggest. Historically, there was also no clear division

between merchant and usurer as the figure of the merchant-usurer was a common one (Sullivan 53; Cohen 768-69). We witness this, for example, in Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* (1589), in which Barabas, unlike Shylock, not only practices usury but is willing to hazard and venture on the seas. In the opening scene of the play, one of the merchants says to Barabas:

> But this we heard some of our sea-men say,
> They wondred how you durst with so much wealth
> Trust such a crazed Vessell, and so farre. (1.1.78-80)[77]

These words echo the sentiment expressed by Salarino and Salanio to Antonio in *The Merchant of Venice*'s opening scene, highlighting Barabas' status as a merchant-usurer. In fact, according to Laura Stevenson's claim that the stage merchant was traditionally 'a villainous usurer who lent money to a prodigal gentleman' (96), *The Merchant of Venice* was one of the few plays of the 1580s and 1590s to show the merchant as honourable and directly opposing the principles of usury. Robert Wilson's *The Three Ladies of London* (1584) offers an interesting contrast to the *Merchant of Venice* in this regard. It too distinguishes the Christian merchant Mercadorus from the Jewish moneylender, Gerontus. Gerontus, the money lender, however, is shown to be far more generous and charitable than the unscrupulous Mercadorus, the merchant. The dichotomy Shakespeare presents between generous merchant and villainous usurer is therefore by no means one we should take for granted.

Shakespeare not only keenly illustrates the division between merchant and usurer but at first seems to make Shylock an exaggerated representation of the stock usurer. The two most common images of the usurer appearing in the literature of the time were that of usurer as unnatural money breeder and

[77] All quotations from *The Jew of Malta* are taken from Christopher Marlowe, *The Jew of Malta* ed. N. W. Bawcutt.

usurer as cannibal, both of which Shylock is associated with in the play (Sullivan 45-48). However, Shakespeare also emphasises that Shylock is not insensitive to the community of credit that he finds himself operating in and still cares about his reputation despite the different values he holds with regards to trust and credit. Indeed, Shylock expresses a desire to become part of the Christian community from which he is excluded, when he proclaims to Antonio:

> I would be friends with you and have your love,
> Forget the shames that you have stained me with,
> Supply your present wants and take no doit
> Of usance for my moneys - and you'll not hear me. (1.3.131-134)

Significantly, Shylock expresses a willingness to forgive that is later so markedly absent from, and desperately sought after, in the trial scene. Shylock's words are noteworthy because he advances an offer to participate in the Christian community on their terms. Not only is he willing to forgive them their slander but he also makes an effort towards adopting their money-lending practices by agreeing to take only a forfeit on the bond rather than interest. We cannot know whether Shylock is being entirely sincere when he voices these words and an actor may choose to perform them insincerely or ironically. However, a comparison of Shylock with Marlowe's Barbaras from *The Jew of Malta* emphasises that Shylock at least retains some sense of the significance of community, whether that be solely the Jewish community or the Venetian community more generally. From very early on in *The Jew of Malta*, we quickly get the sense of Barbaras as being a 'radical individualist' (Kitsch 144) who looks out for no one but himself and will eliminate anyone who crosses his path, including his own daughter and his servant. Usury is only the mildest of Barbaras' sins. We know, in contrast, that Shylock possesses good standing in the Jewish community of Venice due to Tubal's

readiness to lend money to him and Shylock's own co-operation in meeting the Christians for supper and agreeing not to take interest on the bond suggests that his attempt at crossing the divide between the Jewish and Christian communities is a genuine one.

His attempt, however, is dismissed out of hand by Antonio, a memory that no doubt returns to Shylock in the trial scene. In the meantime, Shylock's concern with his reputation is clear. As well as hating Antonio for being a Christian and because he 'lends out money gratis and brings down / the rate of usance here with us in Venice' (1.3.40-41), he also hates him because he deliberately goes out of his way to discredit Shylock. The hurt Shylock feels from Antonio's attack on his reputation is seen, for example, in the opening of his famous 'Hath a Jew not eyes?' speech in 3.1:

> He hath disgraced me and hindered me half a million, laughed at my losses, mocked my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies, and what's his reason? I am a Jew. (3.1.45-48)

Shylock is keen to emphasise the damage that Antonio's mocking has done to his business, in hindering him 'half a million' and thwarting his bargains, but also that he has disgraced him and made him fall out of favour both with his friends and with his enemies, meaning he has caused him to lose credit both in the financial sense and in the social sense. Shylock knows that the reason he is excluded from the culture of credit is due to his religion because of the fundamentally different attitude that the Jews and the Christians have towards money but nevertheless his credit in terms of social and financial standing remains a concern.

Antonio not only discredits Shylock but also dehumanises him by repeatedly calling him 'dog' and 'cur' and the other Christian characters in the play follow

suit. The comparison of usury to a canine-like appetite was a common rhetorical move by anti-usury tract writers, going hand in hand with descriptions of usury as 'biting'.[78] As well as bestialising Shylock, another implication of such insults is that usury is a trade that requires no skill, such that even a dog could do it. Shylock refutes these claims by trying to make the Christians see how absurd it would be if this were literally true. In answer to Antonio's question 'shall we be beholding to you?' (1.3.101), Shylock retorts:

> You that did void your rheum upon my beard
> And foot me as you spurn a stranger cur
> Over your threshold. Money is your suit.
> What should I say to you? Should I not say,
> 'Hath a dog money? Is it possible
> A cur can lend three thousand ducats?' (1.3.111-16)

Shylock points out the hypocrisy of Antonio's demand: he spurns Shylock as a 'stranger cur' for his practice of usury and yet, when he finds himself in need, he is happy to make use of the services which he has previously condemned without recognising that this essentially represents an endorsement of the practice for which he insults Shylock. Antonio's hypocrisy highlights that while it might be honourable to have all one's capital tied up in merchandise which is overseas, it creates problems in terms of a lack of liquidity which can only be solved by those who are not accorded honour and in fact even denigrated for their role.

Although we can see Shylock's demand for a 'pound of flesh' as his attempt to metaphorically castrate Antonio (Shapiro 126-128), we can also see it as his attempt to discredit and dehumanise Antonio in the same way that he thinks Antonio has done to him. By so doing, Shylock tries to participate in some way

[78] For other examples, see Aleman Sig.B5^{v} and Heywood, *The Fair Mayde of The Exchange* Sig.D3^{r}.

in the culture of credit. When he thinks about what he wants to 'gain / by the exaction of the forfeiture' (1.3.156-157), he decides on:

> A pound of man's flesh taken from a man,
> [which] is not so estimable, profitable neither,
> As flesh of muttons, beefs or goats. (1.3.158-60)

Shylock indicates that his goal of taking a pound of flesh from Antonio is to reduce him to the status of an animal whose worth is predicated on the value of their flesh. When Antonio has been stripped of his honour, his flesh will be worth even less than that of a goat which was commonly associated with lechery (Drakakis, *Merchant* 220). 'Estimable' refers to worth in terms of reputation while 'profitable' refers to worth in terms of financial wealth: Shylock aims to deny Antonio of credit in both these senses, as Antonio has done to him.

Not only does Shylock the usurer share Antonio the merchant's concern with credit but Antonio's reputation as an honourable merchant is, to a certain extent, dependent on Shylock's actions and his usurious practices which he is so against. Thus Shakespeare asserts the division between merchant and usurer only to show that one cannot function without the other. We see this when Antonio declares of Shylock:

> He seeks my life; his reason well I know:
> I oft delivered from his forfeitures
> Many that have at times made moan to me;
> Therefore he hates me. (3.3.21-24)

Antonio suggests, perhaps unwittingly, that his deliverance of others from Shylock's 'forfeitures' has been key to building his reputation as 'the kindest man' (3.2.290). In order to be charitable, there has to be someone in need of charity and Shylock and the other Jews who practice usury fulfil this need for the Christian merchants. This in turn reflects the role of the Jews in Venetian

society as a whole. Venice first opened its borders to Jews in 1516 with the creation of the first ever Jewish Ghetto, although prior to that they served the city from afar (Holderness 27). The Jewish community in Venice was both 'privileged and restricted'. Chambers and Pullan write that while the privileges allowed trading relations to take place which worked to everyone's advantage, the restrictions worked 'to prevent…completely free association on equal terms between Venetians and foreigners' (335). Despite these restrictions, and the fact that they were deliberately separated from Venetian citizens, the Jews were integral to the health of the Venetian economy. In his *History of Italy* (1549), William Thomas writes that 'It is almost incredible, what gaine the Venetians receive by the usurie of the Jewes, bothe privately and in common' (76).[79] Here Thomas is referring to the taxes that the Venetian state would have received from the Jews as well as the higher rents they had to pay in the ghetto but also to the fact that, if they found themselves in financial difficulties, the state would ask them for larger loans (Holderness 37). This practice was also one that England was no stranger to: before the Jews were expelled from England in 1290, Edward I often made use of the Jews' wealth and only expelled them once their reserves had been depleted (Kaplan 248-49). Venice is thus paradoxically dependent on those whom it excludes from citizenship. *The Merchant of Venice* shows the figure of the honourable Christian merchant to be based on a similar contradiction. Shylock is as necessary for Antonio's reputation as an honourable merchant, as the wealth of the Jews is for the success of Venice, indicating that at the heart of mercantilism as a whole lies an irresolvable ambiguity. This ambiguity demonstrates to us that a community founded on the principles of

[79] Hadfield also cites this sentence and argues that Thomas' *History of Italy* was one of Shakespeare's key sources for his portrayal of Venice ('Republican Venice' 73) and 'undoubtedly the central influence on English perceptions of Italy' ('Republican Venice' 68).

mercantilism is an unsustainable one, as we will witness further in the trial scene, where a sense of ambiguity penetrates even to the law.

4. Venice and the Law

If the members of the Christian mercantile community are most concerned with the need for hazarding and venturing, it was imperative to the continued success of the city that the institutions and government of Venice were held to be trustworthy. Peter Mathias, an economic historian, notes in his analysis of risk, credit and kinship in early modern enterprise that, as a general rule, the weaker the institutional context of a state, the more emphasis was placed on interpersonal trust when it came to credit transactions (17). With its unique mixed-constitution government, however, Venice, in what was known as the 'myth of Venice', was famed for the strength of its institutions, ensuring law, order and integrity. John Pocock writes in *The Machiavellian Moment* that a key aspect of the myth of Venice 'consists in the assertion that Venice possesses a set of regulations for decision making which ensure the complete rationality of every decision and the complete virtue of every decision-maker. Venetians are not inherently more virtuous than other men, but they possess institutions that make them so' (324). Thus, in Venice, trust was placed in the institutions in which the populace operated with the expectation that they would guarantee virtue and justice.

The institutional trust present in Venice was key to its reputation as the 'common and general market to the whole world', because it allowed the city to attract merchants and traders from across the globe. One of the ways it did this was to generate a reputation as the city where priority lay, above all, with trading conditions and as a place where everyone who came there to trade would be treated fairly by the law. Craig Muldrew writes of early modern England that 'in general, the authority of the law was considered

fundamentally important by all ranks of society for the maintenance of trust and the keeping of order. Contractual philosophers stressed that civil society was based on the keeping of agreements' ('Interpreting' 179). In other words, without a robust and honest system of law to uphold broken promises and debts, the system of credit would collapse in on itself (Stretton, 'Contract' 120; Muldrew, *Economy* 202-203). This is even truer in Venice as we see when Antonio famously makes reference to the power of Venetian law:

> The Duke cannot deny the course of law,
> For the commodity that strangers have
> With us in Venice, if it be denied,
> Will much impeach the justice of the state,
> Since that the trade and profit of the city
> Consisteth of all nations. (3.3.26-31)

As Antonio here suggests, the law was particularly important in protecting the interests of those who were outsiders and therefore more vulnerable, but no less important to Venice's reputation (Eagleton 41). Shylock himself recognises this when he gleefully informs the Duke that if he denies him the forfeit of his bond 'let the danger light / upon your charter and your city's freedom!' (4.1.38-39). As Thomas emphasises in *The History of Italy*, the perceived liberty allowed to strangers was an important factor drawing them to the city:

> All men, specially strangers, have so muche libertee there, that though they speake verie ill by the Venetians, so they attempt nothyng in effecte against theyr astate, no man shall controll theim for it … Further, he that dwelleth in Venice, maie recken him selfe exempt from subiection. For no man there marketh an others dooynges, or that meddleth with an other mans livyng … And generally of all other thinges, so thou offende no man privately, no man shall offende them whiche undoubtedly is one principall cause, that draweth so many straungers thither. (Sig.Z^{v-r})

Not only are strangers supposedly not discriminated against for their alien status, but they 'especially' are seen as having liberty in Venice, implying that they have more liberty than citizens do.

One of the consequences of Venice's structure of trust is that the Duke is afforded little power. The only thing he can do to try and stop Shylock claiming Antonio's forfeit is to try to 'persuade' (3.2.279) him otherwise. The Duke's lack of agency in the face of Venetian law is exemplified when Bassanio appeals directly to the Duke:

> I beseech you -
> Wrest once the law to your authority;
> To do a great right, do a little wrong
> And curb this cruel devil of his will. (4.1.212-15)

In his request, Bassanio is essentially appealing to a notion of equity: the prerogative of the Duke to value his own moral opinion over the law 'to do a great right'. Before the Duke himself even has the opportunity to respond to Bassanio, however, Portia-as-Bathalzar steps in to claim:

> It must not be. There is no power in Venice
> Can alter a decree established.
> 'Twill be recorded for a precedent,
> And many an error by the same example
> Will rush into the state. It cannot be. (4.1.216-20)

Portia makes clear that the institutional and legal structure of Venice overrides all other forms of power, including the Duke's, by bookending her explanation with the commands 'it must not be' and 'it cannot be'. Instead, the power to answer Bassanio's request lies in Portia's hands because she knows how to argue the case legally and use Venice's institutional structures to her advantage. The fact that the power resides with a citizen and not with a ruler demonstrates Venice's republican status. At the end of the trial scene, however,

Portia returns the power to the Duke by deferring to him in deciding Shylock's punishment. We therefore see how the constitutional structures of Venice are such that even the Duke possesses little ability to manoeuvre within them.

Shylock clearly believes in this power of the law and Venice's institutional structures to create justice for everyone, as it is the only thing he is willing to put his trust in. Throughout the trial scene, he shows his faith in the legal system by ignoring all requests to be merciful and stating 'I stand here for law' (4.1.142) and even 'I crave the law' (4.1.204). In the trial scene we also see Shylock employing the language of honour for the first time. When Portia-as-Balthazar negates the ability of the Duke to 'wrest once the law to your authority' (4.1.213), Shylock exclaims: 'O wise young judge, how I do honour thee!' (4.1.222). Shylock thus makes clear that his conception of honour rests on respect for the law which he himself holds in such high esteem.

Shylock also views the law as something that cannot be swayed by the power of rhetoric and therefore thinks of the court as a space in which he is safe from the rhetoric of Antonio which has previously harmed him and his reputation. As soon as it becomes clear that Antonio is going to have to forfeit his bond, Shylock states 'I'll have no speaking; I will have my bond' (3.3.17). Noticeably, in the trial scene Shylock goes into verse, but he nevertheless states: 'There is no power in the tongue of man / To alter me! I stay here on my bond' (4.1.239-40).

Ironically, Portia's emphasis on language is what leads to his downfall. She lays a trap for Shylock with words and leads him along it step by step, firstly, as Tim Stretton has noted, by mirroring Shylock's literalness towards language and allowing him only to take a pound of flesh but 'no blood, nor cut thou less or more / but just a pound of flesh' (4.1.323-324) ('Contract' 113). Secondly, she turns the law itself against Shylock by announcing:

> The law hath yet another hold on you.
> It is enacted in the laws of Venice,
> If it be proved against an alien
> That by direct, or indirect, attempts
> He seeks the life of any citizen,
> The party 'gainst the which he doth contrive
> Shall seize one-half his goods. (4.1.345-351)

Similar to the way in which the necessity of the money-lending of the Jews to the Venetian culture of credit and honour is hidden, this law which serves to protect Venetian citizens is subsumed within Venice's reputation for being just and fair, only being revealed when the situation absolutely requires it. Julia Reinhard Lupton points out that in this speech Portia shifts the 'charges from civil to criminal grounds' (*Citizen-Saints* 95). Consequently, Shylock finds himself betrayed by the one thing he trusted. In his refusal to be swayed by three times the amount of money he is owed, Shylock represents a danger to the Venetian commonwealth because he acts against his own love of money for the sake of revenge which nearly results in the death of one of Venice's most beloved citizens. For once, fortune has not been on Antonio's side and the danger of hazarding is suddenly revealed. Like a true Christian merchant, Antonio thinks his death at the hands of such misfortune would be an honourable one and he seems to take a strange delight from the indulgent self-pity that such an outcome affords him, telling Bassanio 'You cannot better be employed, Bassanio, / Than to live still and write mine epitaph' (4.1.117-18). Yet although Antonio is happy to be martyred, it is not a sacrifice that the Venetian state is willing to make. Forcing Shylock to convert to Christianity is a way of depriving him of his livelihood, the practice of which nearly resulted in such an unpalatable outcome. By preventing him from practicing usury which is forbidden under Christian doctrine, Shylock's conversion forces him to take part in the dominant structure of trust: unable to make money from

lending it out at interest, Shylock will have to find another occupation which, in Venice, may well be a form of mercantilism, where he too will find himself subject to the risks of ventures like those Antonio has undertaken.

Noticeably, Antonio uses the relationships of the household in order to tie Shylock, however unwilling he may be, into the Christian community by stipulating that his estate must go to Jessica and Lorenzo. Jessica and Lorenzo have already proved their ability to treat their goods in the prodigal Christian fashion and thus by giving them Shylock's possessions, Antonio ensures that he is bestowing them into the Christian culture for posterity. We might remember here that Shylock himself borrowed the three thousand ducats he lent to Bassanio from his kinsman Tubal. Agreeing to Antonio's conditions means that Shylock has no way of paying what he owes to Tubal and that this wealth is lost to the Jewish community forever. Jessica, on the other hand, as the prodigal daughter, is rewarded for her actions. Unlike the biblical prodigal son, however, she is not rewarded through the forgiveness of her father but through the calculations of the Venetian state whose forgiveness of Shylock is predicated on Shylock's reacceptance of his daughter and son-in-law. In his speech announcing the conditions that Shylock must agree to, Antonio himself indicates the conceptual shift in his thinking about his daughter and son-in-law that is required by Shylock to accept these conditions. Antonio initially refers to Lorenzo as 'the gentleman / That lately stole his daughter' (4.1.382-383) but, a few lines later, then describes him as 'his son Lorenzo and his daughter' (4.1.388), modelling the transition Shylock is forced to make from seeing Lorenzo as a thief to being part of the family. Antonio is therefore forcing Shylock to re-establish the bonds of the household that have been sundered during the action of the play. As a result, Shylock's house is no longer the refuge it once was from the Christian community as is symbolised

by the fact that Shylock is required to sign the deed passing his goods over to Jessica and Lorenzo in his own home: he can no longer use his home as a place to hide from what he does not agree with.

We should also note that Portia's motivations for resolving the difficulties of the trial scene arise from relationships of the household: she desires to save Antonio from his forfeit not for Antonio's own sake but so that Bassanio can be 'bound' only to her as her husband. Thus, the play employs the discourse of household as a potential solution to the instabilities caused by mercantilism. However, the fact that Shylock is forced into repairing his familial bonds rather than doing so willingly, destroying the idea of his home as a sanctuary from the Venetian community, indicates that this solution comes with problems of its own, an idea furthered developed in the final act.

5. Trust and the Household in Belmont

The structure of credit and trust takes on a different dimension in Act Five where Portia and Nerissa set out to teach their husbands that trust is as important in the household setting as venturing is in the mercantile world and to change their husbands' allegiance to that of the household. In the trial scene, Bassanio and Graziano are dismissive of their newly married status. Their key concern is with their fellow merchant and with honour, as is highlighted when Bassanio claims he would sacrifice his wife for Antonio's sake and Graziano asserts of Nerissa that he 'would she were in heaven so she could / Entreat some power to change this currish Jew' (4.1.289-91). Nerissa responds with the retort that 'Tis well you offer it behind her back / The wish would make else an unquiet house' (4.1.291-93). Upon their return to Belmont it is indeed an 'unquiet house' that greets them. Although the Venetian influence can be seen in Belmont by the fact that love and commerce are intertwined and in the prominence of the motifs of hazarding and venturing, Belmont is not founded

on merchandizing principles as Venice is. The household reasserts its importance as the foundation of the commonwealth which in turn emphasises the need for trust between husband and wife. Lorenzo's speech about the 'sweet harmony' (5.1.57) of the spheres stresses that the concord missing from the Venetian community might be found in Belmont due to this shift in emphasis away from mercantile principles. Lorenzo emphasises the role that trust plays in the creation of this harmony when he remarks to Jessica that 'the man that hath no music in himself, / Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds, / Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils; / . . . Let no such man be trusted!' (5.1.83-88).

The importance of the household in Belmont, as opposed to in Venice, is conveyed by Portia's willingness to follow the instructions of her father, despite the fact she might not want to. Jessica, on the other hand, pays no attention to her father's wishes. The change of attitude in Belmont is also shown by Portia's willingness to trust Jessica and Lorenzo with the management of her household, unlike Shylock, when she tells them: 'I commit into your hands / The husbandry and manage of my house / Until my lord's return' (3.4.24-26). Portia here invokes the classical sense of *oikonomia* derived from Aristotle's *Politics* as both 'husbandry' and 'household management' and thus reminds us of the centrality of the household to a healthy and functioning economy, a fact seemingly forgotten in the mercantile world of Venice. The willing acceptance of Jessica and Lorenzo into Portia's house stands in stark contrast with their escape from Shylock's house and emphasises the status of the household as a locus of stability in Belmont compared to Venice.

Bassanio and Graziano, however, do not appreciate the importance of trust and on their return to Belmont, a conflict is staged between the honour of the Venetian mercantile community and the trust of the household. When they

first marry, Portia gives to Bassanio a ring, saying 'this house, these servants, and this same myself / Are yours, my lord's. I give them with this ring' (3.2.170-171). Portia thus makes clear to Bassanio that the ring symbolises not only their marriage but the person of Portia herself and her entire household. The ring has a similar function to the picture of Portia inside the lead casket in that an object is used to signify her person. While Bassanio is happy to accept the casket as a representation of Portia herself, he does not accord the same respect to the ring, giving it away to Balthazar at the request of Antonio. In an attempt to justify why he has given away Portia's ring, Bassanio tells her, that although he first refused to give it to Balthazar, he then:

> Was beset with shame and courtesy;
> My honour would not let ingratitude
> So much besmear it. (5.1.217-219)

Graziano is the first to admit that he has given away his ring, explaining to Nerissa that he gave it to 'a prating boy that begged it as a fee / I could not for my heart deny it him' (5.1.164-5) but, unlike Graziano, Bassanio explains why he gave away the ring explicitly in terms of honour. He emphasises that when Balthazar asks Bassanio for the ring, he faces a choice between maintaining the bond of trust with his wife or maintaining his honour. Significantly, it is Portia herself who introduces the language of honour into the discussion. She responds to Bassanio's claims that she 'would abate the strength of her displeasure' (5.1.198) if she knew for whom and what he gave the ring by saying:

> If you had known the virtue of the ring,
> Or half her worthiness that gave the ring,
> Or your own honour to contain the ring,
> You would not then have parted with the ring. (5.1.199-202)

Portia reminds Bassanio that honour has its place in the household too, but that it is earned through being trustworthy not through risking credit. Bassanio himself expresses a distaste for 'the ugly treason of mistrust' (3.2.28), nevertheless his honour within the Venetian community is still more important to him than that with his wife. We have already seen that Antonio and Bassanio's relationship is very much based on honour and it is therefore appropriate that Antonio should be the one to persuade him to give away the ring.

In Portia's opinion, the ring acts like a contract but Bassanio does not treat it in the same way he would treat a contract with Antonio. In order to make Bassanio and Graziano realise what their breach of contract involves, Portia and Nerissa detail the behaviour that they can undertake now that the bond of trust in their marriage has been undermined. Portia claims to Bassanio:

> I will become as liberal as you:
> I'll not deny him anything I have -
> No, not my body nor my husband's bed! . . .
> Now by mine honour, which is yet mine own,
> I'll have that doctor for mine bedfellow. (5.1.226-33)

Portia emphasises that this behaviour is a direct result of Bassanio's, she is following his example. As well as underlining that she remains a chaste wife, Portia's use of 'honour' here to mean virginity highlights that, in the context of the household, honour means something quite different than the type of honour to which Bassanio refers, and which, moreover, is in the possession of the wife. We are reminded again of Dod and Cleaver's statement that 'the honour of all dependeth onely on the woman: in such sort, that there is no honour within the house, longer than a mans wife is honourable' (Sig.L6^{v}, qtd. in Shepard, 'Manhood' 75). Portia is reminding Bassanio of the power that lies

with her to cuckold him and warning him that if he does not respect the honour of the household, neither will she.

In order to compensate for his role in the loss of Bassanio's ring, Antonio plays a key part in the restoration of trust between husband and wife. Portia berates Bassanio for his duplicitous 'oath of credit' (5.1.246) to which he responds:

> Nay, but hear me:
> Pardon this fault, and by my soul I swear
> I never more will break an oath with thee. (5.1.246-48)

Before Portia has the time to respond to this plea, Antonio interrupts, unbidden, to assert that, rather than his body which he already 'did lend' (5.1.249) to Bassanio, he is now willing to pledge his soul 'upon the forfeit, that your lord / will never more break faith advisedly' (5.1.252-53). Antonio thus takes on the role of mediator between husband and wife and finds himself again acting as 'surety' (5.1.254) for Bassanio. Portia here sees a way to subordinate the bond of friendship between Antonio and Bassanio to that of their marriage. Lorna Hutson describes early modern male friendship as 'an economic dependency as well as an affective bond' (*Usurer's* 3) and details the way in which women were used as 'signs of credit' (*Usurer's* 7) among men. Upon his marriage, Bassanio's economic dependency is immediately transferred to Portia as is illustrated by Portia putting her riches at Bassanio's disposal in the hopes of saving Antonio. Portia then uses the ploy with the rings to transfer her status as a sign of credit between the two men to Antonio who becomes a sign of credit between husband and wife, by standing as surety for Bassanio's 'faith'. In this way, the bond of friendship between the two men becomes subordinate to the bond of marriage and helps to serve it. If Bassanio were to break his promise with Portia now, he would be endangering not only

his own soul but Antonio's also, giving him added incentive to keep his 'oath of credit'.

The play's final words emphasise that Bassanio's and Graziano's change of allegiance to the household has been successfully achieved. Graziano ends the play by remarking:

> Well, while I live I'll fear no other thing
> So sore as keeping safe Nerissa's ring. (5.1.306-7)

Many have found these lines to be somewhat of an inappropriate ending to the play due to their sexual innuendo. It is true that Graziano's tone of ribaldry somewhat undercuts Portia's serious declamation that the men must follow the women inside so that they can 'charge us there upon interrogatories, / And we will answer all things faithfully' (5.1.298-99). Bassanio's last words are spoken in a similar tone to Graziano's. He addresses Portia: 'Sweet doctor, you shall be my bedfellow. / When I am absent, then lie with my wife' (5.1.284-85). Despite their tone, the play's last words allow us to see that Graziano, and by extension, Bassanio, are now prioritising the need to treat the ring as a symbol of trust and to protect the chastity of their wives, thereby thinking of their reputation as husbands and not just as merchants.

Nevertheless, tensions remain in the final scene, most clearly exemplified through Antonio's position, as well as Jessica and Lorenzo's relationship and their place within the community of Belmont. Having agreed to act as Bassanio's surety, Antonio finds himself in the same position at the end of the play as he was at the beginning: alone and without having resolved his melancholy. Meanwhile, Lorenzo's final words praising the 'manna' (5.1.294) he and Jessica gain from the transference of Shylock's possessions seem to indicate that Jessica was right to suspect that Lorenzo gave her 'many vows of faith' but 'ne'er a true one' (5.1.19-20), being principally interested only in her

money. Several recent productions of *Merchant* have ended with Jessica standing alone on the stage, away from the rest of the group (Drakakis, *Merchant* 148), indicating that even her marriage to Lorenzo and the move from Venice to Belmont is not enough to overcome the boundary between the Christian and Jewish communities.

Shakespeare therefore makes a deliberate attempt in the final act of the play to contextualise the culture of credit in terms of the household rather than of merchandising. By ending the play in such a fashion, he suggests that the maintenance of structures of trust within the household offers a solution to the problems of instability that have been revealed in Venice where the need to be trustworthy is negated by the necessity to venture and 'hazard all'. At the same time, he also indicates that this solution is not necessarily always an easy one because it comes with certain difficulties of its own. The play shows us, for example, that trust between husband and wife can remain uneasy, as in the case of Jessica and Lorenzo, highlighting that relationships between community members and between household members require continued work and negotiation in order to be able to exist harmoniously even with the existence of structures of trust.

In *Measure for Measure* too, as we shall look at in the next chapter, household structures are important but this time in terms of the intersections between sexual and political consent. In comparison to Duke Ephesus of *Errors* and the Duke of Venice in *Merchant*, Duke Vincentio in *Measure* exerts far more effort in attempting to control his citizens. Therefore, while thus far we have focused our attention on the relationship between community members, we will now consider more closely the relationship between ruler and subject and the resulting impact on the political community.

Chapter Three: Negotiating the Strength of Common Consent in *Measure for Measure*

Discussions of *Measure for Measure* (1603-4) often remark that the Duke's opening speech offers a concise statement of the play's major concern: the desire 'of government the properties to unfold' (1.1.3).[80] Indeed, critics often read the play as a commentary upon themes such as royal absolutism, the nature of James I's rule and the role of sovereign justice and equity.[81] However, looking at the play from a point of view that considers 'the nature of our people' (1.1.9), rather than the nature of their ruler, allows us to situate the play within an alternative political tradition: as advocating the necessity of the common consent of the people to the achievement of a harmoniously run commonwealth. In many ways, *Measure for Measure* is a sustained meditation upon the nature and significance of consent: all the major plot events revolve around consent, either marital, political or a convergence of the two. Furthermore, the play explores all possible scenarios relating to the issue of consent between two parties, whether that be a mutually consenting union, a mutual withholding of consent or the refusal of consent from one party.

The basic tenet of the political theory of common consent is that 'political power first resided in the community' (Sommerville, *Royalists* 60) and as such 'the commonwealth is created through an agreement among those subject to its authority' (Kunat 16). Like absolutism, the theory of common consent has

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[80] Hadfield, *Republicanism* 206, see also *Renaissance Politics* 191; Shuger 1; Goossen 217; Goldberg 38. Hammond perceptively notes that although the Duke suggests this question, he then refuses to answer it and Shakespeare thus 'raises and then frustrates our expectations by mentioning a formal disquisition on government which is not delivered' (496). Hammond sees this as a 'devious, self-frustrating opening' which is retrospectively characteristic of the play at large (496).

[81] For the role of absolutism in the play see Dollimore; Greenblatt 129-63; Goldberg; Tennenhouse, *Power* 154-59; Adelman 88. For the play's connections to James I see Bennett and Goldberg and for the role of justice and equity and see Magedanz and Shuger.

its basis in natural law and its advocates 'held that human nature rendered society and government necessary' and 'admitted that by nature fathers hold power over families' (Sommerville, *Royalists* 60). Whereas believers in absolutism, however, equated the power of the father with the power of the king, believers in the theory of common consent denied this equivalence and argued that the king derived his power from the consent of the governed. In other words, there existed a reciprocal obligation between king and subjects. Amanda Bailey points out, in her discussion of embodied consent in *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* that the notion of consent is somewhat paradoxical since 'consent emanated from the individual, yet consent was the condition of communal cohesion' ('Personification' 405). While, by the time of Locke and Hobbes, social contract theory would come to be defined by the consent of the individual, at the time when Shakespeare was writing *Measure for Measure*, the focus was still very much on the consent of the community as a whole.[82]

This chapter will argue that *Measure for Measure* illustrates the significance of the role of common consent, that is, particularly of the community rather than of the individual, in the creation of a harmonious commonwealth and the corresponding destruction caused by the lack of common consent. Throughout the play, issues of marital and sexual consent are used to highlight analogous concerns with political consent. Carol Pateman, in *The Sexual Contract*, notes that the idea of the original contract posited by political theorists is 'a sexual-social pact, but the story of the sexual contract has been

[82] Oakley, in his discussion of the evolution of consent theory from medieval times to the seventeenth century, writes that in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries consent was not 'the assent of a concatenation of free and equal individuals imposing on themselves an obligation which of their ultimate autonomy they could well avoid, but the consent instead of free communities, possessed at a minimum of the original right to choose their rulers, perhaps also to choose the form of government under which they were to live, maybe even to participate on some sort of continuing basis in the governmental process' (*Politics* 122-123). For contract theory and the individual see Kahn.

repressed' (1). By considering political and sexual consent in parallel with one another, *Measure for Measure* highlights the intersections between the sexual and the social in the creation of citizenship and the political community. This chapter therefore builds on the work that Julia Reinhard Lupton has done in investigating the nature of citizenship in the play. In *Citizen-Saints*, Lupton offers an insightful analysis of the nature of citizenship in *Measure*'s Vienna, primarily in relation to the character of Isabella, and the nature of consent regarding the various marriage contracts that the play features. By looking in more detail at the various forms and functions of consent, this chapter aims to change the emphasis of critical attention in the play from the Duke towards the citizens. This is not intended to argue for the triumph of popular sovereignty over monarchical power but rather, on the one hand, to contend that *Measure for Measure* reveals the need for reciprocity between citizens and between ruler and subjects, and, on the other, to try to recuperate a vision of *Measure's* Vienna from the citizens' point of view.

1. Common Consent from Aristotle to Sir Thomas Smith

Although ideas of consent, political obligation and the social contract were not to reach their zenith until the later seventeenth century with the publication of such works as Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1651) and Locke's *Second Treatise of Government* (1690), the idea of common consent in political philosophy existed even in ancient political thought. In Book 4 of the *Politics*, for example, Aristotle distinguishes between kingly rule and tyrannical rule on the basis of consent. He writes that 'autocratic monarchs' and 'people called dictators' could be considered both tyrants and monarchs because they 'were kingly in as much as they were based on law, and involved monarchical rule over willing subjects; but both were tyrannical in as much as the monarchs ruled like masters in accordance with their own judgement' (4.10.1295a10-17 118).

However, there is also another type of tyranny 'which [was] held to be tyranny in the highest degree, being a counterpart to absolute kingship'. Aristotle continues:

> Any monarchy is necessarily a tyranny of this kind if the monarch rules in an unaccountable fashion over people who are similar or better than him, with an eye to his own benefit, not that of the ruled. It is therefore rule over unwilling people, since no free person willingly endures such rule. (4.10.1295a17-23 118).

In this definition, the unwillingness of the population to be ruled, or in other words, their lack of consent to be ruled, forms one of the key criteria for tyranny, alongside a lack of consideration for the common good. Aristotle, therefore, believes that the consent of the people is a necessary requirement for a justly ruled commonwealth. Various writers throughout medieval and early modern times sustained a belief in this requirement.[83]

The practice of common law provided one of the main ways in which theories of consent or contract were disseminated in early modern England. In *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law*, John Pocock argues for the significant influence of the belief in the ancient constitution and the common law in early modern England, whereby the rights and liberties of the commons of England are believed to have been in existence since 'time immemorial' passed on through the ages by custom. The significance of custom lay in the fact that if custom 'no longer suited the needs of the people, it was said, they would by now have thrown it away; that they have not done so proves that, however ancient it may be, it cannot be out of date' (15). The influence of the common law on early modern political thought and society more widely was so pervasive, Pocock tells us, that we can speak of the existence of the 'common

[83] For the role of consent in medieval political thought see Monahan; Oakley, 'Legitimation'; Sommerville, *Royalists* 58.

law mind' (55). Belief in the common law had important implications for the relationship between sovereign and subjects:

> A truly immemorial constitution could not be subject to a sovereign: since a king could not be known to have founded it originally, the king now reigning could not claim to revoke rights rooted in some ancestor's will. In an age when people's minds were becoming deeply, if dimly, imbued with the fear of some sort of sovereignty or absolutism, it must have satisfied many men's minds to be able to argue that the laws of the land were so ancient as to be the product of no one's will, and to appeal to the almost universally respected doctrine that law should be above will. (Pocock, *Ancient* 51)

The common law therefore provided a way to prove that the king was not above the law, as absolute monarchists liked to claim. James VI and I, for example, sets out to prove that 'the king is above the Law' (75) in *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies* (1598). One of the ways he does so is to undermine the basic tenet of the common law that 'the Lawes and state of our countrey were established before the admitting of a king'. He claims that the first King of Scotland was King Fergus who came over from Ireland and 'by his owne friendship, and force, as well as of the Ireland-men who came with him . . . hee made himselfe King and Lord, as well as of the whole landes, as of the whole inhabitants within the same'. As such, contrary to 'the false affirmation of such seditious writers', it was 'a wise king comming in among barbares, first established the estate and forme of government, and thereafter made lawes by himselfe, and his successours according thereto' (73). Implied within this foundation story is James VI and I's belief that authority arises from force and conquest.

The common law, in contrast, highlighted the need for the consent of the governed, being consonant, as it was, with natural law (Greenberg 19). The idea of the consent of the governed was a central principle of natural law.

Natural law theorists, including Gerson, Almain, Suarez and Grotius, and later Hobbes and Locke, built on the work of St. Thomas Aquinas when they claimed that 'royal power was derived from the community, not from God alone' (Sommerville, *Royalists* 58). Although Pocock does not place much importance on the role of the consent of the governed in the ancient constitution, Janelle Greenberg demonstrates that advocates of the ancient constitution also believed that 'the king held his office upon trust and condition and by compact and consent; the people, however defined, elected rulers and owed them obedience only so long as they governed lawfully. Monarchy, therefore, originated in a governmental contract which bound king and subjects alike' (11).[84] Greenberg thus emphasises that a belief in the necessity of common consent arises alongside the idea of the ancient constitution.

We can see this belief in the need for consent, and the alignment between theories of common law and natural law, when we look at the work of Sir John Fortescue. Fortescue was a prominent fifteenth century judge and an important intellectual predecessor of Sir Edward Coke, who was a highly influential promoter of the common law. Fortescue's writings were hugely popular in early modern England, being reprinted many times in the late sixteenth century.[85] In his *The Governance of England* (1471), in a similar manner to Aristotle, Fortescue distinguishes between two different types of rule which he calls *dominium regale* and *dominium politicum et regale* or 'only royally' or

[84] Burgess claims 'the language of original contracts and natural rights is totally alien to ancient constitutionalism; an original contract contradicted the doctrine of immemoriality' (74). Greenberg, however, refutes this claim, 21-22.

[85] *A Learned Commendation of the Politique Lawes of England* was reprinted in 1567, 1573 and 1599, as well as many times throughout the seventeenth century making Fortescue, in Sommerville's words, 'an Elizabethan best-seller' (*Royalists* 83).

'royally and politically' (83). He begins his tract with a discussion of the difference between the two:

> They differ in that the first king may rule his people by such laws as he makes himself and therefore he may set upon them taxes and other impositions, such as he wills himself, without their assent. The second king may not rule his people by other laws than such as they assent to and therefore he may set upon them no impositions without their own assent. (83)[86]

In his history of these two different types of rule, Fortescue explains that *dominium regale* came first when Nimrod 'oppressed the people by force, and therefore he was a tyrant and called "the first of the tyrants"' (85). Nimrod is a biblical figure, whose story is told in Genesis 10:8-12, the great grandson of Noah and the leader of the kingdom of Babylon. Shelley Lockwood, in her notes to *The Governance of England*, remarks that Fortescue is not alone in describing him as a tyrant: 'Nimrod is extensively used as the "first tyrant" whose rule was founded by conquest' (85 n.13). Nimrod stands as the archetypical example of the first type of king, who rules by *dominium regale*, because he not only imposes laws and taxes upon his citizens without their assent but he also imposes his rule on them in the first place by force.

On the other hand, the founder of the tradition of *dominium politicum et regale* is none other than Brutus, great grandson of Aeneas and the legendary forefather of Britain. Fortescue, after detailing others who follow in Nimrod's example, explains:

> But afterwards, when mankind was more civilized, and better disposed to virtue, [there arose] great communities, as was the fellowship that came in to this land with Brutus, willing to be united and made a body politic called a realm, having a head to govern it - since, following the saying of the Philosopher, every community united of many parts must

[86] All quotations from Fortescue are taken from Lockwood ed. *The Governance of England*.

> needs have a head - then they chose the same Brutus to be their head and king. And they and he upon this incorporation, institution, and uniting of themselves into a realm, ordained the same realm to be ruled and governed by such laws as they would all assent to, which law is therefore called 'political', and, because it is administered by a king, it is called 'royal'. (86)

In this passage, Fortescue clearly brings together the main concepts of natural law, the creation of the political community by assent, and of the common law, the existence of the laws since the time of Brutus or, in other words, since 'time immemorial'. There are several points of interest worth highlighting. Firstly, there is an undeniable emphasis on consent. It is important to note that the consent of the governed could be either active or passive. Arthur Monahan explains that popular consent 'appears under two aspects':

> (1) an active aspect according to which the people express their consent by actually doing something – voting, choosing, approving, acclaiming, concurring, and thereby providing evidence of their consent by performing a specific action; (2) a passive aspect wherein willingness, acceptance, agreement are understood to be present although not directly expressed or necessarily expressible in a specific procedure. (xiii)

In this example, the subjects not only consent to Brutus' rule but in fact choose him 'to be their head and king', rather than passively accepting someone who has nominated themselves. They thereby illustrate a remarkably active form of consent. Moreover, Fortescue stresses that the incorporation of king and subjects into a realm is a mutual act that requires the input of both, emphasizing the role of the citizens by making the subject of the sentence 'they and he', rather than 'he and they' as we might expect. In the passage as a whole, Fortescue views the nature of consent from the viewpoint of the subjects, rather than the king, putting the emphasis on the fact that they chose him. Noticeably, the locus of this consent is to be found specifically in the

community not in the individual, evidenced by Fortescue's insistence on the 'unity' of the community. References to the community's unity are made three times in the space of two sentences, without including the description of England under Brutus' rule as a 'fellowship'. Secondly, the passage emphasises that communities were only able to arise in the first place because mankind 'had become more civilized and better disposed to virtue'. In other words, the presence of virtue is a necessary prerequisite for the creation of a community and this must be inherent within the citizens themselves, it does not originate from their ruler.

Thirdly, this passage also highlights the significance played by laws in a commonwealth based on the consent of the governed: it is in fact the laws, agreed to by all, that are depicted as doing the actual work of governing the community. The king's responsibility is merely to administer these laws. Related to this, we should note that this type of rule, as opposed to *dominium regale*, which is only royal, is both political *and* royal, not solely political. That is to say that, allowing for the power of the consenting subject does not deprive the ruler of their power, both can exist alongside and complement one another in a form of mixed government. As *The Governance of England* continues, Fortescue goes on to compare the *dominium politicum et regale* of England with the current situation of *dominium regale* in France in order to highlight the detrimental impact of such a rule in a context that would be familiar to his readers.

Sir Thomas Smith's *De Republica Anglorum* was one of the many sixteenth century texts influenced by Fortescue's writing and the common law tradition. The first book of the *De Republica* acts as a 'theoretical introduction to alternative types of government' (Shrank, *Writing* 166), during the course of which Smith makes known some of his views on the necessity for the consent

of the governed.[87] His conception of consent is very similar to that of both Aristotle and Fortescue, with its focus on tyranny and the corresponding lack of concern for the common good that tyranny involves:

> A tyraunt they name him, who by force commeth to the Monarchy against the will of the people, breaketh lawes alreadie made at his pleasure, maketh other without the advise and consent of the people, and regardeth not the wealth of his communes but the advancement of him selfe, his faction, & kindred. (Sig.Biii^{r})

Smith points to the fact that tyrants not only make new laws without the consent of the people but also disregard previous laws without the people's assent. This is noteworthy in the context of *Measure for Measure*'s first performance shortly after James I's accession to the English throne, and particularly in light of the text of the early Stuart coronation oath which 'incorporated two important revisions of medieval precedent' (Sommerville, *Royalists* 64). The coronation ceremony was a significant moment in the relations between monarch and subjects because it did important work in establishing the dynamics of the relationship between them. Sommerville describes the changes in the Stuart coronation oath:

> The first was an addition. Instead of simply undertaking to observe the old law, the king now consented to do so only if the law was compatible with "the prerogative of the Kinge". The second was an alteration. The king agreed to maintain the "laws and customs which the communalty … have", and not "which the communalty have … chosen". (Sommerville, *Royalists* 64)

This relatively minor change in the text reflects a significant ideological shift. A king who 'breaketh lawes alreadie made at his pleasure' is now no longer a tyrant, as Smith would have him be, but acting entirely justly on his

[87] For a discussion of Smith's attitude towards the different forms of government, political participation and the role of the governed more generally, see Shrank, *Writing* 166-175.

'prerogative'. The second change to the oath is perhaps even more significant in that it denies the agency, and thus the sovereignty, of the 'communalty' in the previous decision making processes about the law. This is anticipated in an earlier change made to the coronation ceremony, instigated from the reign of Edward VI onwards. Sid Ray notes, in her discussion of political consent in *Titus Andronicus*, that:

> From the early reigns of Edward the Confessor and William the Conqueror up to the coronation of Edward VI, the "election" ritual in which the people were asked if they consented to the new ruler was vital to the coronation. But at the Tudor boy-king's accession the election ritual was changed into a simple "recognition" ritual in which the people of England, represented by the peers of the realm, were merely asked if they "recognized" the new ruler. The ritual was altered because "election" implied that the monarch had a profound obligation to the people, an implication that did not accord with the Tudor claim to absolute power. (27)

Thus, although it is not possible for a monarch to take the throne 'against the will of the people', against which Smith protests, the role played by consent under Tudor and Stuart rule is dramatically reduced from the role it played in earlier eras.

Smith also emphasizes the key role the Parliament played in England in relation to consent, declaring that 'the consent of the Parliament is taken to be everie mans consent' (Sig.F^{v}). As Oliver Arnold describes, in his book *The Third Citizen*, in England 'the "people themselves" did not consent directly to the laws that bound them; they enjoyed instead the "ancient freedom" of electing the 450 or so MPs who sat in the House of Commons' (3). Arnold's key argument is that the Commons in fact did a very poor job of representing the wishes of England's subjects. Despite this failure, the emphasis on the consent of the Parliament stresses the idea of consent as the expression of the community as a whole rather than the expression of individual will. Under

James I's rule, the power of the Parliament and the necessity for them to consent to James' proposal on the Union became a key and contentious issue. James I's inability to move forward with his plans for Union without the Parliament's agreement disproved his assertion in *The Trew Law* that Parliament 'is nothing else but the head Court of the king and his vassals' (74).

One way in which James I sought to promote his plans for Union was through strategic marriages of English and Scottish nobles, celebrated with elaborate nuptial masques and entertainments (Curran 4). By so doing, James made 'explicit links between personal and political forms of union' (Curran 8) and thereby related questions of political consent to questions of marital consent. James was not the only one to do so: the convergence of marital and political rhetoric with regards to consent was commonplace. Political theorists often employed the model of the marriage contract in their discussion of social contract theory to help them think through the implications of the social contract and political obligation (Amussen 58). Shakespeare, in *Measure for Measure,* does likewise, using questions of marital and sexual consent to reflect on issues of political consent and vice versa.

2. The Dangers of Common Consent in *Measure for Measure's* Vienna

When *Measure for Measure* first begins, the common consent of the Viennese population is not an issue because, due to the Duke's lax rule, they have the freedom to live as they like. The action of the play, however, is sparked by the declaration of war between Hungary and Vienna and the Duke's subsequent realisation that he needs his citizens to act as soldiers. The Duke must therefore consider the impact of his lenient rule upon his citizens' behaviour. In early modern England, writers and thinkers were divided as to whether the best defence of a country in war was provided by mercenary soldiers, for whom soldiering was their profession, or citizen-soldiers, who returned to their

normal occupations once the fighting was over (Sisson 138). While a preference for mercenary soldiers was usually associated with contemporary Venice, the use of citizen-soldiers was thought to originate from an ancient Roman conception of war (Sisson 140). *Measure for Measure*'s Vienna employs both professional soldiers and citizen-soldiers. Act 1, Scene 2 opens with Lucio in mid-conversation with two gentlemen who, it quickly becomes clear, are professional soldiers. When Lucio speculates upon the forthcoming war with Hungary, the First Gentleman immediately responds: 'Heaven grant us peace, but not the King of Hungary's!' (1.2.4-5) to which the Second Gentlemen replies 'Amen' (1.2.6). The First Gentleman then proceeds to explain that 'there's not a soldier of us all that, in the thanksgiving before meat, do relish the petition that prays for peace' (1.2.14-15), highlighting their status as soldiers who find themselves out of a job in peacetime. Lucio's constant punning on the soldiers having venereal disease indicates that even the soldiers are not immune from the Viennese vice of sexual laxity. As well as the professional soldiers, Lucio tells Isabella that the Duke 'bore many gentlemen, myself being one, / In hand and hope of action' (1.4.52-53), revealing the Duke's intention to raise up an army of citizen-soldiers, presumably to bolster the numbers of the professionals. If Lucio's behaviour is any indication, many of these gentlemen will not be up to the task of defending their country, given Lucio's reluctance to obey authority figures. Thus neither Vienna's professional soldiers, nor its citizen-soldiers, are in any fit state to go to war.

The reason for their lack of preparedness for war is that, as an urban community, Vienna is lacking in many of the corporate structures that ancient and early modern writers viewed as necessary to the formation of soldiers, especially citizen-soldiers. We have already witnessed in previous chapters the importance of the household to the creation of dutiful citizens, as

emphasised by Aristotle in his *Politics* (1.3.1253b1 5). *Measure's* Vienna, however, is entirely bereft of any structures relating to the household: only Elbow is married, and the only other marriage featured in the play, that of Juliet and Claudio, looks set to end disastrously.[88] Instead of institutions such as the household and the guild, that we might expect to find in an urban community, the main institutions in Vienna are the brothel and the prison. Rather than trade, the Viennese economy sustains itself through the exchange and circulation of bodies. Shakespeare emphasises the engrained nature of the brothel and the prison in the city's corporate structure by showing how one eventually turns into the other. We see this most clearly when Pompey, arriving in prison, remarks: 'I am as well acquainted here as I was in our house of profession. One would think it were Mistress Overdone's own house, for here be many of her old customers' (4.3.1-3). Moreover, Lucio's remark to Pompey when he is first sent to prison that 'you will turn good husband now, Pompey; you will keep the house' (3.1.320-21) stresses that, in Vienna, the prison takes the place of the household.

As well as the absence of the household, *Measure*'s Vienna, however, is severely lacking in other types of civic structures which has serious implications for the ability of its citizens to act as soldiers. The most influential text in sixteenth century England to argue for the need for citizen-soldiers was Machiavelli's *The Arte of War*, first circulated in English translation in 1560 (Barker 57). Machiavelli directly addresses the main arguments of those who were in favour of professional soldiers over citizen-soldiers, which were, as he summarises, that using the citizens as soldiers would prompt 'all kinde of violence' with the soldiers making 'afraied other menne' upon their return to

[88] In her chapter on *Measure* in *Shakespeare's Domestic Economies*, Natasha Korda remarks that the play is 'devoid of familiar, familial forms of domesticity: no one is "at home" in this play and virtually no one is married' (160). See also Jaffa 203-5.

civic life and that civic life inadequately prepares men for military activity because its customs are 'too effeminate' (13).[89] Machiavelli refutes these arguments when he says of the relationship between civic society and military custom that:

> There should nothing be founde more united, more confirmable, and that of necessitie ought to love so much the one the other, as these: for as much as all the artes that are ordained in a common weale, in regarde or respecte of common profite of menne, all the orders made in the same, to live with feare of the Lawe and of God, should be vaine, if by force of armes their defence wer not prepared, which well ordeined, doe maintain those also whiche be not well ordeined. And likewise to the contrarie, the good orders, without the souldiers help, no lesse or otherwise doe disorder, than the habitacion of a sumptuous and roiall palais, athough it wer decte with gold and precious stones, when without being covered, should not have wherewith to defende it from the raine. (13-14)

Machiavelli posits the relationship between military custom and civic society as one in which each is dependent upon the other for success of the commonwealth. An army of citizen-soldiers benefits the commonwealth because it inculcates in its members a greater sense of awareness of the need for the common good. Meanwhile, the manners the soldiers learn while civilians will help them to become good soldiers. Machiavelli implies that a strong sense of civic culture is therefore necessary for a strong army of citizen-soldiers.

In *Measure for Measure*, however, the only character to display a sense of civic duty and to hold office is the local constable Elbow who arrests Pompey, the tapster, and Master Froth, a gentleman in his company, for frequenting brothels and a suggested assault upon his wife. That Elbow is the only

[89] All quotations from Machiavelli's *Arte of War* are taken from Peter Whitehorne's 1560 translation, printed in Henley ed. *Tudor Translations*.

Viennese citizen interested in community building is reflected in the fact that he was the only one in his ward interested in undertaking the role of constable in the first place. Elbow has great pride in being 'the poor Duke's constable' (2.1.45) and takes his duties very seriously, as we see when he arrives on the scene and announces:

> If these be good people in a commonweal, that do nothing but use their abuses in common houses, I know no law. Bring them away. (2.1.41-43)

Despite being ridiculed for the rest of his appearance on stage for his constant and unintentional use of malapropisms, Elbow's initial statement is highly insightful. Under the Duke's terms of rule for Vienna, Pompey and Froth are indeed 'good people in a commonweal' precisely because 'they do nothing but use their abuses in common houses', just as most Viennese citizens do. Moreover, Elbow's remark that he knows no law, ironically highlights that under the Duke there effectively is no law. The Duke realises that until this situation is rectified he is lacking a proficient army and he therefore seeks to employ the 'precise' (1.3.50) Angelo to rule in his stead.

By so doing, however, the Duke is aware that the common consent of his subjects, which has gone untested for so long, will inevitably be called into question. We see that while the Duke believes the consent of an individual can be manipulated, he is also aware that the consent of the community as a whole is much more dangerous to his perceived status as an absolute ruler. As individuals, he takes the consent of his subjects for granted. We witness this particularly in the case of Angelo, who the Duke has especially selected, without consulting him, 'our absence to supply' (1.1.18). When handing over 'the organs / Of our own power' (1.1.20-21) to Angelo, the Duke assumes his willingness and consent to take on this role and responsibility despite Angelo's immediate protests:

> Now, good my lord,
> Let there be some more test made of my mettle
> Before so noble and so great a figure
> Be stamped upon it. (1.1.47-50)

The Duke dismisses Angelo's protest out of hand by simply responding 'no more evasion' (1.1.50). By employing the metaphor of a coin being stamped, Shakespeare is not only invoking the idea of Angelo as a counterfeit (Nugent), but also Angelo's helplessness and lack of choice in taking on this role that has been imposed 'or stamp'd' upon him. The idea of being 'stamp'd' also implies use of force. This is a noticeable departure from Cinthio's *Hecatommithi* (1565), one of the source texts for *Measure for Measure*, and the one which provides Shakespeare with the model of a ruler handing over power to his deputy. In Cinthio's version of the story, before handing over power over Innsbruck to Juriste as a deputy, the Emperor emphasises that Juriste must 'keep Justice inviolate' (Bullough 420) and 'if therefore you do not feel it incumbent upon you to behave in this way I urge you (since every man is not good for everything) do not take up this charge, but rather remain here at Court, where I hold you dear, in your accustomed duties' (Bullough 421). No similar caution, however, appears in *Measure for Measure*, emphasising the way in which the rule of Vienna is forced upon Angelo despite his obvious unwillingness. Many of the changes Shakespeare makes to his source texts, namely *Hecatommithi* and George Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra* (1578), serve to emphasise the notion of consent, some of which we will discuss in further detail below. The Duke does not give Angelo any option because he intends to test him, with the suspicion that he will fail, and because he knows it is within his power to do so.

When it comes to his subjects as a group, however, the Duke finds himself on much more uncertain ground. In declaring to the Friar his reasons for going

undercover, the Duke initially appears to have the utmost confidence in his authority over his subjects:

> We have strict statues and most biting laws,
> The needful bits and curbs to headstrong jades,
> Which for this fourteen years we have let slip, . . .
> Now, as fond fathers,
> Having bound up the threatening twigs of birch
> Only to stick it in their children's sight
> For terror, not to use, in time the rod
> More mocked than feared becomes. (1.3.19-27)

By comparing his subjects to disobedient children and viewing himself as their 'fond father', the Duke is implying that the consent of his subjects to his rule is a given, just as children had no choice but to obey their fathers.[90] Yet, as his conversation with Friar Thomas continues, the Duke reveals his awareness that this consent is predicated on the fact that, to use the words of Lucio, 'use and liberty, / . . . have for long run by the hideous law / As mice by lions' (1.4.63-65). In other words, the Viennese subjects have consented to the law precisely because it is not strictly applied and therefore this consent could be thrown into doubt were he to suddenly enforce the law which 'hath slept' (2.2.91) for these last fourteen years. When Friar Thomas berates the Duke for not attempting to 'unloose this tied-up justice' (1.3.32) when he had the chance, the Duke responds:

> 'Twould be my tyranny to strike and gall them
> For what I bid them do. For we bid this be done,
> When evil deeds have their permissive pass
> And not the punishment. (1.3.36-39)

Markku Peltonen writes, in relation to his discussion of Beacon's *Solon his follie* (1594) and in the context of the behaviour of Englishmen in Ireland, that 'the

[90] For the rule of fathers over their children see Brewer and Schochet.

key to the successful establishment of the new laws was to be found in the winning of the good will of the people' (87). Although the Duke is not attempting to enforce new laws, he is attempting to reassert those that have been long forgotten. The Duke both acknowledges it would be hypocritical of him to begin enforcing the laws when he has not done so in so long and recognises that the reinforcement of the 'most biting laws' will not be well-received by his citizens: it will be necessary 'to strike and gall them', to use coercion to get them to obey. 'Strike' and 'gall' are terms that belong to the lexicon of horse-riding and by using them, the Duke is invoking the metaphor of the governor as rider, and the state as horse. The use of this metaphor has important implications in terms of consent: as an animal, the horse has no choice but to obey his master's commands. The Duke thus implicitly acknowledges that the Viennese citizenry will not consent to a harsher rule which leaves him with two choices: coercion or persuasion, either of which would leave the Duke vulnerable to slander, a 'fight' (1.3.42) into which he is not prepared to enter. Noticeably, Claudio also employs the same metaphor of the governor as rider and state as horse to describe Angelo's reign when he declares that, under Angelo's rule, 'the body public be / A horse whereon the governor doth ride, / Who, newly in the seat, that it may know / He can command, lets it straight feel the spur' (1.2.147-150). Once he has taken up the reins of power, Angelo therefore, unlike the Duke, does not hesitate to disregard the need for common consent completely.

Like the Duke, however, he nevertheless recognises the potential danger posed by the idea of common consent, as we see through Claudio's being singled out for punishment. Among the Viennese citizens, Claudio and Julietta's relationship is unique in that it is a mutually consenting union, as Claudio emphasises when he informs Lucio that Julietta's pregnancy is a result

of their 'most mutual entertainment' (1.2.142). In the source texts, *Hecatommithi* and *Promos and Cassandra,* however, the relationship between the Claudio and Julietta characters is far from mutual because Claudio is accused of rape. Shakespeare therefore makes a deliberate decision to emphasise the mutuality of Claudio and Julietta's relationship and thus to highlight the issue of consent. Despite their legal status as husband and wife, they are singled out for exemplary punishment because they 'the denunciation lack / of outward order' (1.2.136-37). [91] Lucio inadvertently highlights the irony of Claudio being punished for this sin in particular when he remarks that Claudio is 'ever precise in promise-keeping' (1.2.69) and can therefore presumably be trusted to keep his promise to Julietta, even without having declared his intention publicly. [92] Isabella similarly stresses the unusual nature of Claudio's punishment. When Lucio informs her that her brother 'hath got his friend with child' (1.4.30) and reveals that this friend is Julietta, Isabella immediately responds 'O let him marry her!' (1.4.49), indicating that this would be the normal course of action in such circumstances (Hayne, 'Performing' 6). Isabella's reaction serves to emphasise the irony of Claudio and Julietta being subject to punishment despite the fact that they are already married. Julia Lupton argues that more important than Claudio and Julietta's marriage itself is its nature as a 'hand-fast' marriage, a type of union which 'takes the strikingly lateral and reciprocal gesture of hand-holding as its corporeal icon'. Thus, 'by choosing this path to marriage, Claudio and Julietta not only separate their union from direct supervision by the state and its church, but

[91] Much has been written about the different types of marriage contracts available in early modern England in relation to *Measure for Measure*. See, for example, Balizet 26-30; Scott; Hayne, 'Performing' 4; Korda, *Domestic Economies* 162-63.

[92] In her discussion of consent in *All's Well that Ends Well*, Julia Lupton discusses in detail the relationship between consenting and promising, recognising that 'both are forms of agreement that commit the subject to a future course of action' (*Thinking* 102).

they also instantiate, in the equality and mutuality of their bond, an image of civil relation distinct from the one that authorises absolute sovereignty' (*Citizen-Saints* 160). Claudio and Julietta are singled out for punishment, according to Lupton, because Angelo recognises the potential dangers of common consent to an absolute ruler. Lupton's reading is further consolidated by the unequal manner in which Claudio and Julietta are punished, which seems deliberately designed to destroy any sense of mutuality in their relationship: Claudio must die while Julietta is allowed to escape relatively unharmed. This strategy appears to be highly effective: as a result of his punishment, Claudio comes to regret his relationship with Julietta, lamenting that his arrest results from 'too much liberty' (1.2.114), likening their relationship to 'a thirsty evil' that 'when we drink, we die' (1.2.119).

Significantly, at the end of the play, we are given no indication that their relationship will resume after Claudio's release. Carol Neely points out that 'Claudio's and Juliet's affection for each other is never dramatized, and their restored marriage is not celebrated or even acknowledged' (98) except from the Duke's command to Claudio in his closing speech 'she, Claudio, that you wronged, look you restore' (5.1.528). Moreover, the Duke deliberately attempts to undermine Julietta's assertion of her and Claudio's relationship as one based on mutuality. The Duke, in his role as Friar, attempts to characterise Julietta as Claudio's victim when he asks her 'Love you the man that wronged you?' (2.3.24) but, in her response, Julietta defiantly underlines the reciprocal nature of their relationship when she declares 'Yes, as I love the woman that wronged him' (2.3.25). The Duke then tries to undercut this assertion by instructing her that her sin 'was of a heavier kind' (2.3.28) than Claudio's, challenging Julietta's sense that the responsibility should be shared 'mutually' (2.3.26). In seeking to thwart the only mutually consensual union in the play,

therefore, and attempting to humiliate and shame Claudio and Julietta, Angelo and the Duke expose the fact that they view cohesion between citizens and thus the resulting power of common consent as a threat to their sovereignty.

3. Barnardine, the Bed-Trick and the Consent of the Individual

One distinct advantage of the Duke's disguise as Friar in light of the danger of common consent is that it allows him to manipulate his subjects individually and therefore circumvent this danger, as we see him doing throughout the play. In *Wayward Contracts*, an exploration of contract theory in the seventeenth century, Victoria Kahn asserts that 'at the heart of covenant theology was an account of how the individual conscience voluntarily subjected itself to God' (65). Thus by availing himself of the Friar's habit, the Duke is also availing himself of a different kind of authority that is not available to him as ruler: the ability to gain access to his subjects' consciences and manipulate them accordingly.[93] Although the Duke is reluctant to employ his powers of rhetoric to convince his subjects as a group that the reinforcement of the 'most biting laws' is necessary for their own good, he shows no qualms about using rhetorical techniques to persuade individual citizens to do as he wishes them to. Perhaps the most well-known example of this is when he persuades Claudio in a long and elaborate speech that he must accept, or consent to, his imminent death. The Duke's speech is prompted by Claudio's admittance that he lives in hope of pardon from Angelo, at which point the Duke gives several reasons why Claudio should 'be absolute for death' (3.1.5), including that life is only something 'fools would keep' (3.1.8), that man is made not of one substance but merely 'exists on many a thousand

[93] See Shuger – a key point in her argument in *Political Theology* is that the Duke's role as Friar affords him a different type of authority from that as sovereign.

grains / that issue out of dust' (3.1.20-21). He continues to argue that it is impossible to ever truly be content because either one has youth but not the money to enjoy it or one has money but 'neither heat, affection, limb, nor beauty / to make thy riches pleasant' (3.1.37-38). By the end of this tirade, Claudio has been persuaded, stating 'let it come on' (3.1.43). Claudio's resolve does not last for long, however, indicating that only the power of the Duke's rhetoric made him agree to his death at all. Similarly, Isabella easily acquiesces to the Duke's wishes with regards to the bed-trick even though his plan consists of substituting her virginity with Mariana's because he is a religious figure and she therefore believes he must have their best interests at heart. When proposing his plan to Isabella, the Duke sets it out as a win-win situation, not only for Isabella, Mariana and Claudio but also for 'the absent Duke' whom the scheme will 'much please' (3.1.198). Isabella replies that she will agree to his scheme because 'I have spirit to do anything that appears not foul in the truth of my spirit' (3.1.200-201). She makes it clear that her agreement has nothing to do with the Duke but everything to do with her soul and with her conscience, whose care she entrusts to the Friar's religious credentials.

The character that most forcefully brings the idea of consent to our attention is Barnardine. Unlike Claudio, Barnardine does not consent to die and obstinately refuses to be persuaded either by the Duke or by Pompey and Abhorson, his executioners. Kiernan Ryan and Cedric Watts have previously recognised the symbolic importance of Barnardine for the play, despite his brief appearance (Ryan, '*Measure*' 143; Watts 192). For our purposes, Barnardine's function in the play is significant not only because he brings the need for consent to the forefront but because he also reveals that individual consent can be just as necessary and powerful as common consent. In terms of the plot, Barnardine's significance lies in the fact that he is due to be executed

on the same day as Claudio and the Duke therefore intends to substitute Claudio's head with Barnardine's to save Claudio's life. His agreement is vital for the Duke's plan but he refuses to be persuaded and defiantly declares to the Duke-as-Friar: 'I will not consent to die this day, that's certain' (4.3.49-50). Barnardine also states that the techniques of rhetorical persuasion that were effective on Claudio will not work on him, stating in response to the Duke-as-Friar's attempts to 'beseech' him: 'I swear I will not die today for any man's persuasion' (4.3.53) and when the Duke protests 'but hear you' (4.3.54), he asserts 'not a word' (4.3.55). Barnardine's refusal throws the success of the Duke's plan into danger. We might think that a prison, of all places, is a place where the need for consent is suspended, making Barnardine's refusal even more remarkable. Yet the Duke takes Barnardine's refusal to consent very seriously, describing him to the Provost as: 'A creature unprepared, unmeet for death, / And to transport him in the mind he is / Were damnable' (4.3.60-62), indicating that the right to consent is not only the right of a citizen but a fundamental human right. Moreover, Shakespeare stresses that, unlike Claudio, Barnardine has nothing to lose, being, as he is, 'a man that apprehends death no more dreadfully but as a drunken sleep; careless, reckless, and fearless of what's past, present, or to come; insensible of mortality, and desperately mortal' (4.2.136-39). Barnardine disregards any sense of legal, theological or ethical obligation and thinks only of his own contentment. Especially highlighted in relief with Isabella's and Mariana's willing acquiescence, Barnardine's refusal to consent to the Duke's plan serves to illustrate the political power that resides within subjects when they realise their own individuality. Given the swift replacement of Barnardine's head with Ragozine's, however, it is a power that is only momentarily realised before being negated.

The bed-trick forms a counterpart to the Barnardine episode both because it is also an act of substitution and because Mariana's consent is key to the success of the Duke's plan. In this case, the marital contract is used to highlight further issues of political consent in the same way as Claudio and Julietta's relationship represents the bonds of reciprocal obligation between citizens. Shakespeare would have known of the bed-trick used in the ninth tale of the third day in Boccacio's *Decameron*, one of his source texts for *All's Well That Ends Well*, which contains a similar bed-trick to *Measure*. The bed-trick, however, does not appear in any of the recognised sources for *Measure for Measure* and was thus Shakespeare's own addition. The use of the bed-trick is not required in Cinthio's *Hecatommithi* nor in Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra* because in both of these texts the Isabella character agrees to sacrifice her virginity for her brother's life. Thus, by having Isabella defy Angelo's wishes, Shakespeare brings the notion of consent to our attention not only through the means of Isabella's refusal itself but also by means of the bed-trick. Although the bed-trick has been a very popular device in non-dramatic literature since the story of Leah, Rachel and Jacob in the Bible, there are only two known uses of the device on stage before *All's Well That Ends Well* (1603).[94] In *Measure for Measure* the bed-trick is integral to the resolution of the plot, as the Duke highlights when he proclaims to Isabella that 'by this [the bed-trick] is your brother saved, your honor untainted, the poor Mariana advantaged, and the corrupt deputy scaled' (3.1.242-44). The one action of the bed-trick resolves all the tensions generated by the play. Shakespeare avoids the problem of representing the bed-trick on stage by having it take place off-stage.

[94] Victoria Hayne in her review of Marliss Desens' book *The Bedtrick in English Renaissance Drama* writes that there are potentially four plays which used the bed-trick before *All's Well* but that the dating of two of these is uncertain ('Review' 496). See also Briggs for a detailed history of the bed-trick in early modern literature.

Nevertheless, due to its importance to the plot, he presents us with the detailed mechanics of how it will work, meaning that the innovative use of this device in a dramatic context would have caught the audience's attention and involved them in its ethical dilemma. A subsequent increase of the use of the device from 1605 onwards indicates it works highly effectively as a dramatic technique (Briggs 293).

For the bed-trick to take place successfully, Mariana's consent first needs to be solicited. Unlike Barnardine, Mariana gives her consent willingly although, as the key conversation regarding her consent between her and Isabella takes place off stage, we remain unaware of the extent she has, or has not, had to be persuaded. Noticeably, Mariana never speaks her consent but rather Isabella speaks on her behalf, telling the Duke: 'she'll take the enterprise upon her, father, / if you advise it' (4.1.64-65) to which the Duke replies 'it is not my consent, / but my entreaty too' (4.1.65-66). This is a clear example of the Duke-as-Friar using his disguise to manipulate his subjects' actions: Mariana's consent is contingent upon the Duke-as-Friar's approval. The Duke himself highlights his manipulation of Mariana when he says: 'The maid will I frame and make fit for his attempt' (3.1.244-45). Moreover, he is not even sure that his plan will be successful. Explaining his idea for the bed-trick to Isabella, he says: 'If the encounter acknowledge itself hereafter, it may compel him to her recompense' (3.1.240-42). The Duke therefore acknowledges that, at this point, the outcomes he wishes to achieve with the bed-trick are only hypothetical and might not necessarily be realised. One of the key differences between the bed-trick in *Measure for Measure* and that in *All's Well* is that in *All's Well*, Helena herself concocts the plan of taking Diana's place in her bed, meaning that her consent is not brought into question. In *Measure for Measure*, in contrast, at best, Mariana's consent can be said to be passive and at worst, coerced.

With the Duke believing he has settled the question of Mariana's consent, the question remains about Angelo's consent, or lack of it. The Duke justifies his plan to Mariana by telling her:

> He is your husband on a pre-contract.
> To bring you thus together 'tis no sin,
> Sith that the justice of your title to him
> Doth flourish the deceit. (4.1.70-73)

The Duke legitimates the idea of the bed-trick via the means of a 'precontract'. In the final scene of the play, however, Angelo makes it clear that, from his point of view, he had irreparably broken off this contract. He did so by making it known that Mariana's 'reputation was disvalued / in levity' (5.1.226-27) because he knew that to depict Mariana as unfaithful to him was the safest way to ensure that their pre-existing contract was annulled in the eyes of all who knew them. Based, as it is, on dishonesty, Angelo's conduct is highly unethical and hence the Duke decides that the contract should nevertheless be enforced. We cannot, however, overlook the fact that the union that takes place between Angelo and Mariana is non-consensual on Angelo's part. In her comparative study of the uses of the bed-trick in world literature, Wendy Doniger writes that 'rape and the bedtrick are illegitimate forms of sexual access, one by force, the other by guile' (84). Angelo, previously the aggressor in a rape scenario now becomes the victim and in two senses: physically but also more broadly in the sense that he is forced back into a contract he did not want to keep which will have life-long consequences.[95] Whereas previously Angelo believed the agency lay with him to control their contract, the bed-trick bestows this agency upon Mariana instead. When Mariana reveals to Angelo

[95] For readings of the play that consider Angelo as a rape victim see Aebischer and McCluskie.

what she and Isabella have done, she emphasises the psychological manipulation involved in the bed-trick when she says that Angelo:

> Thinks he knows that he ne'er knew my body,
> But knows, he thinks, that he knows Isabel's. (5.1.202-3)

By playing on two different senses of know, Mariana emphasises the physical and cognitive deception perpetrated by the bed-trick. Again, as in the opening scene of the play, Angelo finds himself in a situation where his consent is neither asked for nor given. This time, however, it is not only the Duke, but also his subjects, Mariana and Isabella, who join forces to deprive him of his right to consent. Mariana is, in many ways, a counterpart, or foil, to Isabella: where Isabella fiercely denies Angelo's advances, Mariana meekly accepts his abandonment of her, all the while continuing to love him. While Isabella advocates the theory of common consent, as we will see below, Mariana and the bed-trick become a symbol of the way in which consent, both marital and political, can be manipulated. Although the Duke recognises that the renewed enforcement of Vienna's 'biting laws' will not be straightforward, he nevertheless believes that his citizens will consent to Angelo's rule even if they do not agree with his enforcement of the laws. This is because he thinks their initial consenting to his own rule carries over to Angelo's rule and therefore legitimises it. Similarly, Angelo's initial consenting to marry Mariana is viewed as still valid. In both cases, this results in illegitimate relationships, whether between husband and wife or ruler and subjects. Ariane Balizet informs us that 'according to canon law, consummation that takes place under mistaken identity invalidates consent and thus could not "make" a marriage at all in medieval or Renaissance England' (26 n.16). Thus Mariana and Angelo's relationship is legitimised in the end not through an act of consensual union but because the Duke pronounces it so. Similarly, it is clear throughout

the play that the Viennese citizens do not consider Angelo's rule as legitimate, seeking out the Duke whenever they disagree with Angelo's rulings because they know that the real power still remains with the Duke.

4. Angelo, Isabella and Consent as Fellow-Feeling

Sexual and political consent collide most forcefully in the encounter between Isabella and Angelo. Both Angelo and Isabella occupy liminal positions in terms of citizenship. By virtue of Lucio calling her away from the convent before she has made her final vows, Isabella's relation to the citizenship of Vienna is curiously indeterminate. While still a novice, she has nevertheless begun the process of leaving behind the Viennese community for the community of sisters. Angelo, meanwhile, finds himself in the somewhat paradoxical position of being a citizen who has been elevated, against his will, to governor, a contradiction in terms. Their liminal status causes them to seek to negotiate their relation to the commonwealth and their citizenship in a way that the other citizens are uninterested in and we can see the confrontation that takes place between them as exactly a negotiation of this kind.

Both try to impose certain ideas of citizenship and community values upon the other. In attempting to coerce Isabella into obeying his demands, Angelo tells her that she must put on 'the destined livery' (2.4.135) of women. His use of the word 'livery' here is key, denoting, as it does, the clothing worn by members of the city guilds and thus one's status as a citizen. Angelo is suggesting that the only way for women to become fully-fledged citizens is to attach themselves to a male partner in some form of relationship. He is attempting to dictate not only what it means to be a woman, but, in particular, what it means to be a female citizen. Isabella, however, is already wearing the 'livery' that signifies her choice: her nun's habit. In the final scene of the play, Lucio remarks that Mariana appears to be 'neither maid, widow, nor wife'

(5.1.184), a line which is often read by critics of the play as describing the three categories to which women were able to belong in early modern England. Lucio himself adds a fourth option to these categories, suggesting that Mariana may be a 'punk' (5.1.183), while Isabella demonstrates a fifth: becoming a nun. While the other four options – maid, wife, widow or prostitute – define a woman in terms of her relationship with men, to become a nun is to choose to break off relations with men altogether, as signified by the strict rules of the Poor Clares' convent, which prohibit their sisters from speaking to and being seen by men.[96] By choosing to enter the convent, Isabella has made a deliberate decision to exclude herself from Vienna's civic community in order to participate in an alternative community that defies Angelo's notion of female citizenship.

Given Angelo's confidence in the 'credent bulk' (4.4.24) of his authority, perhaps what is most remarkable about his interaction with Isabella is his need to procure Isabella's consent to his demands at all. He commands her to 'fit thy consent to my sharp appetite' (2.4.158) but were she to do so it would only be because she was under heavy duress, negating the willingness of her action. Unlike the punishment of Claudio, where Angelo justifies his actions through his role as the administrator and 'voice of the recorded law' (2.4.61), in his interactions with Isabella, Angelo is painfully aware that he is acting outside the boundaries of the law and therefore his action has to be justified by Isabella consenting to it, coerced or not.[97] Similarly, in *The Rape of Lucrece*, Tarquin needs Lucrece to verbally consent to him raping her before he does so: he does not use physical force against her but manipulates her sense of honour as a

[96] Korda tells us that the rules of the Poor Clares were particularly strict in comparison to other convents of the time ('Single Women' 172).

[97] In early modern political thought, the boundary between consent and coercion was much more permeable than it is today. See Monahan, Introduction.

wife, telling her that unless she agrees to his wishes he will make it look like she slept with one of the servants, thereby 'perpetrating his rape through an elaborate rhetorical ploy' (Kunat 6). For both Tarquin and Angelo, Lucrece's and Isabella's consent equates to a validation of their desires and of their sense of themselves as citizens and rulers.

Refusing to submit to Angelo's wishes, Isabella in turn attempts to reform his view of himself as ruler and, to do so, appeals to Angelo's sense of mercy and empathy with his subjects. Discussions of the need for the common consent of subjects among political thinkers often considered the reasons as to why citizens would agree to consent to the rule of a monarch. In the later seventeenth century, when individual subjectivity was becoming important, the answer given was often because of passion or because of fear (Kahn 58). In the early seventeenth century, however, when consent was based around the community, these reasons did not make sense, orientated as they were towards the individual. Rather, one of the reasons given for subjects' willingness to consent can be found in the etymology of the word consent itself, which comes from the Latin word *consentire*, meaning literally 'to feel together'. As Amanda Bailey writes in reference to the *OED* definition of 'consent', 'the word referred to the achievement of likemindedness among several parties that resulted in harmony' ('Personification' 405).

In other words, citizens could consent to be ruled because of 'fellow-feeling' (Bailey, 'Personification' 405). To talk of consent as fellow-feeling was to acknowledge the affective and ethical ties both between citizens and between citizens and their ruler, based on their ability to sympathise with one another, and their recognition of their responsibility both towards one another and towards the creation of the common good. Ideas of consent as fellow-feeling

can be found in political philosophy as far back as ideas of consent themselves. In his discussion of Plato's political thought in the *Republic,* Robert Hall writes:

> The unity of the ideal state of the *Republic* was as close an approximation as possible of the adage, friends have all things in common (424a). This unity was fostered by the having of all things in common by the guardians, the equality of the sexes and the sense of community and fellow feeling engendered by each citizen doing his particular task for the good of the whole. (106)

Plato's consideration of consent, and consent as fellow-feeling, is more sustained in his later text, the *Laws* (Klosko 244-46). Hall remarks that:

> This state [of the mixed constitution of the *Laws*] applied the principles of society ideally realised in the *Republic* – unity, and fellow feeling, wisdom and freedom – to the realities of man's nature and social existence. (105)

Although Aristotle does not discuss the idea of consent as fellow-feeling as explicitly as Plato does, he implies such a thing in his discussion of friendship, justice and community, in both the *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*.[98] In Book 5 of the *Politics*, for example, Aristotle's discussion of tyranny is also revealing of his take on community building. Detailing the ways in which a tyrant can ensure his tyrannical rule is maintained, Aristotle gives several available options:

> [1] Cutting down the outstanding men and eliminating the high-minded ones. Others are: [2] Prohibiting messes, clubs, education and other things of that sort. [3] Keeping an eye on anything that typically engenders two things: high-mindedness and mutual trust. [4] Prohibiting schools and other gatherings connected with learning, and doing everything to ensure that people are as ignorant of one another as possible, since knowledge tends to give rise to mutual trust. [5]

[98] We will discuss Aristotle's representation of friendship in the *Ethics* in the next chapter, see 204.

> Requiring the residents always to be in public view and to pass their time at the gates. (5.11.1313b1-9 166-67)

The main argument of these points, particularly [2], [3] and [4], is that a sense of responsibility towards each other among the citizens is dangerous to the ruler because the citizens are stronger together than they are apart. This sense of responsibility towards each other is generated by a sense of amity or of fellow-feeling which the tyrant must therefore prevent.

In the sixteenth century, some of Thomas More's Epigrams, for example, provide examples of the idea of consent as fellow-feeling.[99] Epigram 94, 'On the Good King and his People' states *Totum est unus homo regnum, idque cohaeret amore* (49, 'A kingdom in its entirety is like a man, and it is held together by affection'). The analogy of the kingdom with a man is commonplace; less so is the assertion that it is held together through affection. Although this epigram lays more emphasis on the role of the king as opposed to the role of the subjects,[100] two of More's other epigrams make clear More's belief in the common consent of the people, and further illuminate his meaning in Epigram 94. Epigram 103, 'The Consent of the People both Bestows and Withdraws Sovereignty', as its title indicates, is a concise statement of this belief: *Quicunque multis vir viris unus praestat, / Hoc debet his quibus praeest. / Praeesse debet neutiquam diutius, Hic quam volent quibus praeest* (52, 'Any one man ruling a multitude of men, owes this to those he rules: he ought, by no means, to rule for longer than those he rules wants him'). Epigram 102, 'A King is Protected,

[99] I became aware of these Epigrams by reading them in Jeffrey S Doty's PhD thesis *Popularity and Publicity in Early Modern England*, 39. Doty's thesis was recently published as *Shakespeare, Popularity and the Public Sphere* but it does not contain reference to the Epigrams. Page references to the Latin text of the epigrams are to Bradner and Lynch.

[100] The remainder of the epigram is: The king is the head, the population make up all other parts. The king counts each citizen as part of his own body (hence why he grieves at the loss of each one). The population excel themselves on behalf of the king and they revere him as the head for which they take the part of the body. (For Latin text see Bradner and Lynch 49).

not by a Corps of Guards, but by his Own Good Qualities', similarly states *Tutus erit populum qui sic regit, utilitorem / Ut populous nullum censeat esse sibi* (51, 'He will be safest who rules the populace such that no other is considered more useful for the populace itself'). Taken together, these three epigrams indicate that, in Epigram 94, the affection of which More speaks refers to a sense of fellow-feeling and common purpose among citizens and between themselves and their ruler.

When the Duke's reign passes to Angelo, and the question of common consent thus becomes a concern, it is clear that consent as fellow-feeling does not exist between Angelo and his subjects. In fact, the Viennese populace repeatedly refer to Angelo as someone who is not only very different from them in lacking any sense of sexual desire but as someone who is incapable of feeling anything whatsoever. As such, he is consistently characterised throughout the play as inhuman, beginning with the Duke's remark that:

> Lord Angelo is precise,
> Stands at a guard with envy, scarce confesses
> That his blood flows, or that his appetite
> Is more to bread than stone. (1.3.50-53)

Lucio similarly remarks that Angelo is 'a man whose blood / is very snow broth, one who never feels / The wanton stings and motions of the sense' (1.4.58-60). Both the Duke and Lucio are concerned first and foremost with Angelo's apparent lack of sexual appetite: it is this which, above all, makes him stand out from the Viennese citizens. We see that Angelo's unusual character causes gossip among the Viennese populace when Lucio later returns to the subject and enquires of the Duke-as-Friar:

> They say this Angelo was not made by man and woman after this downright way of creation. Is it true, think you? . . . Some report a sea-maid spawned him; some, that he was begot between two stockfishes.

> But it is certain that when he makes water, his urine is congealed ice; that I know to be true. And he is a motion generative, that's infallible. (3.1.349-56)

Angelo's character poses such an enigma to the Viennese populace that they find themselves creating myths of origin for him in an attempt to explain how it can be possible for man, so devoid of all feeling, to exist.

Although Angelo fails to create any notion of fellow-feeling among himself and his subjects, he provokes a sense of fellow-feeling among the citizens themselves because they sympathise with Claudio, with the result that their dislike for Angelo creates a sense of community and cohesion among them. Claudio and Juliet are paraded through the streets of Vienna in a kind of shaming ceremony, 'by special charge' (1.2.108) of Angelo. Instead of provoking condemnation from the Viennese citizens, as was presumably Angelo's goal, the citizens sympathise with Claudio and Julietta's plight. Even Escalus, Angelo's right-hand man, disagrees with the decision of his superior and repeatedly expresses his sympathy for Claudio, claiming that 'it grieves me for the death of Claudio' (2.1.254) and announcing that, if only Angelo were to be 'wrought by my pity' (3.1.442-43), Claudio would not have been condemned to die. The Provost succinctly expresses the reason why Claudio's situation garners such support among the Viennese citizens: 'All sects, all ages smack of this vice, and he / To die for't?' (2.2.6-7). Claudio's fellow citizens are aware that it could easily have been them suffering the same fate but they are not, because the law, which it is now Angelo's job to enforce, is not being evenly applied. While they are grateful for this for their own sakes, they are indignant on Claudio's behalf. As we saw in Fortescue's work, one of the key tenets of a civil society based on the consent of the governed is that the citizens should consent to the laws of the land as well as to the ruler. The ruler should then act as administrator of the laws, in order to procure justice for the good

of all concerned. According to Aristotle's *Politics*, the law was supposed to give to the citizenry 'a virtual equality', aided by the interchangeability of governor and governed which helped to create a 'community of interest' (Jordan, 'Household' 314). By only applying the laws to Claudio, Angelo destroys any sense of equality among the citizens and thus the very purpose of the law. Angelo's experience as both governed and governor fails to breed any sense of 'community of interest' in him: he destroys equality among the citizens on purpose and uses Claudio as an example to deter others from the same crime. The Provost's words convey an awareness of the inherent unfairness of Angelo's actions and show that Angelo's attempt to destroy the equality between them provokes the citizens themselves into banding together against him.

Although Isabella herself is an outsider to the Viennese community, more so than both Angelo and the Duke turn out to be, in that she truly abhors the vice of sexual laxity, in suing her brother's case, Isabella becomes an advocate of common consent, especially that which is based on fellow-feeling. Initially reluctant to plead her brother's case, believing that he has indeed committed a crime, Isabella warms to her task. She begins by arguing that only Claudio's fault itself should be exterminated and continues to claim it would 'do the world no wrong' (2.2.54) if he were to be pardoned. She then proceeds to her key argument that, had Angelo's and Claudio's positions been reversed:

> You would have slipped like him, but he like you
> Would not have been so stern. (2.2.66-67)

Isabella is here attempting to provoke a sense of fellow-feeling between her brother and Angelo, to Claudio's advantage, by showing Angelo that he is, at heart, no different from him. Isabella is not the only one to employ this argument. Escalus, for example, appeals to Angelo:

That in the working of your own affections,
Had time cohered with place, or place with wishing,
Or that the resolute acting of your blood,
Could have attained the effect of your own purpose,
Whether you had not sometime in your life
Erred in this point, which now you censure him,
And pulled the law upon you. (2.1.10-16)

Escalus essentially tells Angelo that the only reason he himself is not also guilty of the crime of sexual laxity is because Angelo has not had the opportunity, not because he is in nature different from Claudio. Escalus' words fail to have any noticeable impact upon Angelo and Isabella receives a similar response. When Angelo merely replies 'pray you be gone' (2.2.67), she abandons the attempt to create a sense of sympathy between the two men and, instead, seeks to create a sense of fellow-feeling between Angelo and herself:

I would to heaven I had your potency
And you were Isabel: should it then be thus?
No. I would tell what 'twere to be a judge,
And what a prisoner. (2.2.68-71)

To which Lucio responds 'Ay, touch him, there's the vein' (2.2.71). Throughout her conversation with Angelo, Isabella has had to be spurred on by Lucio's encouragement and remarks of 'that's well said' (2.2.110), symbolising the need for mutuality and reciprocity among the citizens. Isabella continues to expound on this theme, and links it to what her idea of mercy is, when she asks Angelo:

How would you be
If He which is the top of judgement, should
But judge you as you are? Oh, think on that,
And mercy then will breathe within your lips
Like man new made. (2.2.76-80)

Evidently, for Isabella, mercy means to judge someone as you would be judged yourself, an argument which Angelo counters by portraying the law as rigid and impersonal which takes no account of family relations: 'it is the law, not I, condemn your brother' (2.2.81). As we have noted above, Angelo himself contradicts the rigidity of the law by applying it only in selected cases. Moreover, he implies that the law is immune to human weakness such as fellow-feeling but Angelo, as its arbitrator, is not. After making an impassioned condemnation of those who are 'dressed in a little brief authority' (2.2.119) but do not know how to use it, Isabella makes one last attempt at making Angelo see his shared nature with Claudio:

> Knock there, and ask your heart what it doth know
> That's like my brother's fault; if it confess
> A natural guiltiness such as is his,
> Let it not sound a thought upon your tongue
> Against my brother's life. (2.2.138-142)

This last attempt proves, in some ways, too successful: rather than developing a sense of fellow-feeling with Claudio as a result of Isabella's words, Angelo develops a sense of fellow-feeling with Isabella herself, remarking that: 'she speaks and 'tis such sense that my sense breeds with it' (2.2.142-43). As many editors have noted, Angelo is punning on 'sense' here as meaning both import and sensuality (Bawcutt 130). Thus, he could either be referring to the fact that Isabella's arguments have prompted his own thinking or that his sensuality has been aroused by hers. Moreover, somewhat ironically, Angelo misunderstands Isabella's argument. Rather than agreeing that he should show mercy to Claudio because he is capable of making the same mistakes, he takes Isabella's argument that sexual desire is natural to mean that he should allow his own free rein yet not experience any consequences for it. Indeed,

after being overwhelmed with his feelings for Isabella, Angelo realises that he is just like everyone else:

> Ever till now
> When men were fond, I smiled and wondered how. (2.2.189-90)

Previously, Angelo's authority rested on the fact that he is above such base human desires as love and lust that seem to consume the rest of the Viennese population. He is therefore horrified to discover that he too is capable of succumbing to 'temptation that doth goad us on / To sin in loving virtue' (2.2.184-85). Isabella thus succeeds where Angelo fails: she successfully manages to impose her notion of citizenship upon Angelo, not knowing that to do so will be to her own detriment. The power of consent as fellow-feeling proves to be much greater than she had imagined. Yet still, she does not manage to save her brother. Although Isabella has awoken an awareness in Angelo that 'thieves for their robbery have authority / When judges steal themselves' (2.2.178-79), ultimately, his concern for his own well-being and reputation overrides his sense of justice.

5. The Final Scene and the Power of Common Consent

The final scene of *Measure for Measure* is a showcase for coerced consent: Angelo, having not even agreed to sleep with Mariana, is forced to marry her and Lucio is made to marry Kate Keepdown. Moreover, we must not forget the uncertainty surrounding Isabella's acceptance of the Duke's proposal. Even in this final scene, however, the power of common consent is exemplified in various ways, firstly through the character of Lucio. Before the Duke gives out his marriage sentences, Lucio constantly interrupts him and refuses to remain quiet, causing the Duke to reprimand him:

> *Duke* (*to Lucio*): You were not bid to speak.
> *Lucio*: No, my good lord,

Nor wished to hold my peace.
Duke: I wish you now then. (5.1.84-85)

Throughout the play, as we have seen, Lucio often acts as a mouthpiece for the general populace of Vienna. For example, when he tells the Duke-as-Friar: 'They say this Angelo was not made by man and woman after the downright way of creation; is it true, think you?' (3.1.349-51), he is speaking on behalf of many. Lucio also speaks on the behalf of the 'many gentlemen' (1.4.52) whom the Duke bore 'in hand, and hope of action' (1.4.53) when he says that they have learnt that the Duke's 'givings-out were of an infinite distance / From his true meant design' (1.4.55-56). His refusal to remain silent in the final scene, even in the face of the Duke's re-established authority, is therefore significant as it symbolises the resurgence of the citizens' voice despite the reinstatement of the Duke.

Equally significant is the attention that the Duke pays to Lucio rather than merely ignoring him, reflecting his desire to be in absolute control and an awareness that this voice, if not quickly quietened, could cause trouble. Lucio first speaks only because Isabella mentions him and his role in informing her of Claudio's plight. Even though Isabella says 'this gentleman told somewhat of my tale' (5.1.90), the Duke responds by reprimanding Lucio: 'It may be right, but you are i' the wrong / To speak before your time' (5.1.92-93). Similarly, the Duke admonishes him for his statement about Mariana that 'she may be a punk, for many of them are neither maid, widow, nor wife' (5.1.183-84) even though this is true and could be useful information. The Duke's response to Lucio's words betrays the reason he finds himself becoming so irritated: 'Silence that fellow. I would he had some cause to prattle for himself' (5.1.185-86). Soon Lucio will have 'cause to prattle for himself' because he will have to defend himself from accusations of slander, as the Duke well knows. Of all the

citizens who are held to account in the final scene, Lucio receives the harshest punishment, more so than Barnardine, a murderer, and Angelo, a murderer in intention if not in reality. The Duke punishes Lucio so harshly for his slander, not only because he hates the act of slander itself but also due to the nature of Lucio's slander about him. In his aspersions upon the Duke, Lucio essentially accuses him of being no different from his citizens. Speaking to the Duke himself, disguised as a friar, and musing upon Angelo's 'ruthless' (3.1.358) nature in condemning Claudio to death, Lucio asks:

> Would the Duke that is absent have done this? Ere he would have hanged a man for the getting of a hundred bastards, he would have paid for the nursing of a thousand. He had some feeling of the sport; he knew the service and that instructed him to mercy. (3.1.359-64)

He makes an explicit link between the Duke's leniency towards the sexual deviances of his subjects and his own sense of 'feeling of the sport'. In other words, Lucio is arguing that the Duke's behaviour towards his subjects arises from a sense of fellow-feeling with them: he cannot punish them for a behaviour he himself indulges in. The Duke, however, resists this sense of fellow-feeling with them because to admit it would be to compromise his status as an absolute ruler. Any sense of equivalence with his subjects horrifies him as much as it does Angelo.

In contrast, the fact that the Duke still does not take seriously the threat of individual consent is shown by his pardoning of Barnardine. When the Provost appears on stage with Barnardine, the Duke announces:

> Thou'rt condemned;
> But for those earthly faults, I quit them all. (5.1.486-87)

Barnardine's pardon stands in stark contrast to the condemnation of Angelo and Lucio who are also guilty of 'earthly faults'. The adage of 'Measure for

Measure' does not seem to apply to Barnardine. During the play, Barnardine defies the Duke in much stronger terms than either Lucio or Angelo by directly disobeying his command as well as that of Angelo that he must be put to death. The Duke, however, forgives him because he does not think that Barnardine poses a personal threat to him, unlike Lucio or, for that matter, Angelo. Angelo does not threaten the Duke personally but he does threaten the legitimacy of sovereignty in the eyes of the Viennese citizens when he is publicly accused by Isabella of hypocrisy. Although Barnardine's refusal to consent to die derails the Duke's plan, it only does so momentarily, being solved by the fortuitous occasion of Ragozine's death. The Duke therefore fails to take the power of individual consent seriously, hence why he is so willing to forgive Barnardine.

The power of common consent is also exemplified in the final scene through the actions of Mariana and Isabella. Upon learning that the Duke intends to sentence her new husband to death, Mariana pleads with him to change his mind and enlists Isabella's help when the Duke is unrelenting, begging her:

> Sweet Isabel, take my part.
> Lend me your knees, and all my life to come
> I'll lend you all my life to do you service. (5.1.433-35)

With their emphasis on reciprocal lending, Mariana's words highlight both the need for a sense of fellowship between citizens and the power that is derived from mutual dependence on one another. The Duke attempts to prevent any sense of collusion between the two women by highlighting that for Isabella to assist Mariana would violate Isabella's allegiance to her brother, to which Mariana responds by pleading further:

> Sweet Isabel, do yet but kneel by me.
> Hold up your hands, say nothing, I'll speak all. (5.1.440-41)

This tableau of the two women kneeling together in a symbol of unity presents a counterpart image to the symbolism of Claudio and Julietta's handfast marriage but this time is brought to life on the stage. Previously, in the bed-trick, Mariana acted for Isabella's benefit and now Isabella acts on behalf of hers. Whereas the bed-trick was performed at the behest of the Duke, however, now the women act of their own accord and successfully achieve what they set out to do. Although the Duke initially declares that their 'suit's unprofitable' (5.1.457), he later concedes that Angelo should live without any further persuasion or explanation as to his decision. Mariana and Isabella can no longer be perceived as 'instruments of some more mightier member / That sets them on' (5.1.243-44). In her speech that persuades the Duke to agree to Mariana's wishes, Isabella's remark that 'thoughts are no subjects' is significant. She is reminding the Duke, who has just assumed that he knows Isabella's thoughts in telling Mariana that it is 'against all sense' (5.1.436) for her to 'importune' Isabella to her cause, that the minds of his subjects are a realm over which he has no dominion and subsequently they are free to enter into alliances with one another, no matter his opinion. Similarly, Mariana's devotion to Angelo previously suited the Duke's plans and now that it does not, he assumes that he can cast it aside. Mariana, however, is resolute that this will not happen. Her desperation to save Angelo from death also casts new light on the bed-trick. Whereas it was initially doubtful whether she only agreed to it because she was coerced, now it becomes clear that she agreed to it because she wanted to and because it was for her own benefit. Mariana is thus transformed from being an instrument of the Duke who gives her consent passively to a citizen in full command of her right to active consent. In the next chapter, we will consider in more detail the role played by female petitioning in the relationship between citizen and ruler.

Above all, the power of common consent is shown by the fact that, despite Angelo's attempts to enforce the 'biting laws', the Vienna we witness in the final scene remains unchanged from the Vienna we saw at the beginning of the play. Still dressed as a Friar, the Duke condemns the city because there are:

> Laws for all faults,
> But faults so countenanced that the strong statutes
> Stand like the forfeits in a barber's shop
> As much in mock as mark. (5.1.323-26)

The Duke's words here echo his earlier statements in the first Act of the play when he spoke of the laws as being like 'an o'ergrown lion in a cave / That goes not out to prey' (1.3.22-23); the only thing that has changed are the metaphors used to describe the state of the city. If anything, the Duke seems to realise to an even greater extent, just how profoundly lack of respect for the law is ingrained in Vienna. Angelo's governance has failed to make any difference whatsoever. As we have seen, throughout the play, the Viennese citizens make no attempt to hide their lack of consent to Angelo's new regime. Ultimately, despite the initial appearance of change, Vienna is left in a state of stasis because without the consent and willingness of the population, change is unable to occur and the commonwealth is unable to be reformed into one that prioritises the common good.

The one spark of hope comes, surprisingly, from the Duke's proposal to Isabella, or rather, his revised proposal. When he initially asks Isabella to marry him, the Duke commands her: 'Give me your hand and say you will be mine' (5.1.496). Emphasised by the use of the imperative, this proposal is phrased in highly possessive terms. The Duke's asking for Isabella to give him her hand is reminiscent once again of the symbolism of the handfast marriage but this time, given that the Duke does not even give Isabella a chance to respond, there is none of the sense of mutuality implied by Claudio and

Julietta's relationship. The Duke's second attempt at proposing, however, is very different:

> I have a motion much imports your good,
> Whereto if you'll a willing ear incline,
> What's mine is yours, and what is yours is mine. (5.1.538-540)

Here the Duke puts emphasis not only on Isabella's willingness, a willingness that is conditional and that he does not assume, but also on a sense of reciprocity between the two. The Duke, having reflected on Mariana and Isabella's display of reciprocity, assimilates the language of mutuality into his own proposal. In the sentence 'what's mine is yours, and what is yours is mine' the Duke indicates an alternative meaning for the title of the play. 'Measure for Measure' need not only refer to a sense of equality in terms of justice but also to this sense of reciprocity between citizens.[101] Julia Lupton writes that by having Isabella remain silent, Shakespeare ends the play 'with the startling spectacle of *consent in reserve*, bringing forward, suspending, and illuminating the element of mutual agreement that had signed the precontract of Claudio and Juliet and releasing it to irradiate the entire civic field' (*Citizen-Saints* 140). She also views Isabella as 'a feminine allegory of the city itself' (*Citizen-Saints* 152). In this case, Isabella's silence becomes even more significant because we could view the Duke's proposal as asking his city, or the population of Vienna, for consent to rule again and not knowing whether or not he receives it.

The final scene of the play therefore accentuates the importance of common consent but, within that, also the power of reciprocity between citizens from which common consent derives. It offers us a distinct contrast from the opening scene, where the Duke imposes his wishes upon his subjects, barely

[101] Hammond points out that the title of the play indicates 'stability, equality and reciprocity' (519) but that the play itself dismantles these notions. I would argue that it affirms reciprocity if not stability and equality.

giving them an opportunity to object. Although the final scene is even more carefully orchestrated by the Duke, the citizens themselves, including Lucio, Isabella and Mariana, make space for their voices to be heard, indicating that, if the Viennese commonwealth is to be reformed, the Duke will have to learn to work together with his subjects to achieve this.

Measure for Measure thus reflects upon the political debate surrounding the idea of consent at the time it was written, especially given its first performance in Whitehall. By highlighting the requirement for common consent, it anticipates the necessity for James VI and I to procure Parliament's consent in the negotiations of the union. While *Measure for Measure* reveals the analogy between political consent and marital and sexual consent to be a useful one in terms of thinking through the implications of subjects' relationship to their ruler, the eventual failure of the union negotiations indicates that it can also be dangerous to equate the two of them too readily. As James VI and I learns to his cost, his success in facilitating personal unions of marriage does not necessarily equate to a successful political union.

In the next chapter, we will turn to two of Shakespeare's late plays, *The Tempest* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, and take the idea of fellow-feeling as our main theme. We will develop it beyond the context of consent, thinking about its relationship to discourses of civic friendship and as a political link between subjects. We will also consider more closely the role played by female petitioning in negotiating the relationship between subject and ruler.

Chapter Four: Staging the Power of Fellow-Feeling in *The Tempest* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*

Fellow-feeling is key to resolving the action of *The Tempest* (1611). Prospero's fellow-feeling for his old friend Gonzalo prompts his forgiveness which ends the play in line with the recognised trajectory of the romances from revenge to repentance.[102] Fellow-feeling is equally key to the initiation of the action in Shakespeare and Fletcher's collaborative play *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (1613). In a scene vastly expanded from its sources in Chaucer's *The Knight's Tale* and Boccaccio's *Tesseida*, the plot is set in motion by a group of three widows who appeal to Theseus, his wife-to-be Hippolyta, and her sister Emilia, to rescue their husbands' corpses from the battlefield on the basis of fellow-feeling.

This chapter will explore the thematic and structural importance of fellow-feeling in both of these plays. We have already seen in *Measure for Measure* the value of fellow-feeling in the context of consent. Going beyond the context of consent, this chapter will argue that *The Tempest* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* investigate the potential of fellow-feeling as a bond linking political subjects to one another. An important context for this argument is recent scholarship on early modern friendship, in particular Laurie Shannon's *On Sovereign Amity*. Shannon focuses on the 'one soul in bodies twain' model of early modern friendship, as does much of early modern literary criticism.[103] First explored in detail by Lauren J. Mills, this model of friendship occurs between two gentlemen who are equal in status and virtue. As Cicero describes it in *De Amicitia*, one of the key friendship texts of the period, this results in 'a perfect agrement with good will and true love in al kind of good things and godlie'

[102] See below, 223.
[103] For exceptions see Garrison, Chaplin, Heilke and Sierhuis.

(Sig.B6^{v}). [104] Shannon argues that this model of friendship 'operates rhetorically to create agentive subjects and respondent kings' (22) because it allows both within the friendship pair to be equal to one another. However, Shannon also notes that 'friendship discourse offers no comportment or affect to be generalised beyond the pair, no pattern to link all political subjects *to one another*' (18, original emphasis). Thus, we have to look beyond friendship and towards fellow-feeling to find this link.

Several critics have already noted the importance of fellow-feeling in *The Tempest*. Arthur Kirsch is the first to do so as part of his argument for the importance of Montaigne as a source for *The Tempest*. Heather James, meanwhile, in her article 'Dido's Ear: Tragedy and the Politics of Response', uses Miranda's display of fellow-feeling as an entry point into her discussion of the role played by the sympathy evoked between actors and audiences in performances of Shakespeare's tragedies. Most recently, Leah Whittington explores the influence of a 'Virgilian poetics of empathy' on *The Tempest* in order to argue that we should consider the *Aeneid* as a more 'formative' (110) source than we have previously. All these readings of the play focus on the affective implications of fellow-feeling, considering it a synonym for compassion (Kirsch), sympathy (James) or empathy (Whittington). Although these affective resonances remain important, this chapter builds on this work by viewing fellow-feeling not only as an emotion but, specifically, an emotion that has political consequences.

The Tempest's approach to fellow-feeling is dialectical. On the one hand, the play highlights its potential as a bond between subjects and its ability to allow political agency to those usually deprived of it. On the other hand, the play

[104] All early modern English quotations from *De Amicitia* are taken from *The Booke of Freendeship of Marcus Tullie Cicero* trans. John Harrington (1550).

reveals several failures of fellow-feeling, both in terms of effectiveness and inclusiveness. Nevertheless, the necessity of Prospero's fellow-feeling to the play's resolution suggests that the outcome of such a dialectical approach is a tentative endorsement of its need within a community.

In *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, in contrast, fellow-feeling is key to the action from the very beginning and its effects are palpable throughout the course of the play. Shakespeare and Fletcher develop some of the aspects of fellow-feeling we find in *The Tempest*, including its political effectiveness and its status as a specifically female mode of political action. *The Two Noble Kinsmen* also depicts it as a particularly collaborative act, reflecting upon the collaborative nature of the play itself. Correspondingly, the play also shows the traditional ideal of *amicitia* to be one that functions better in civic and public settings rather than in isolated and private ones.

Taken together, therefore, *The Tempest* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* reveal a deep-seated concern with the ways in which fellow-feeling both succeeds and fails in creating a bond which functions across the community. Investigating this theme across the two plays, moreover, illuminates a strong thematic continuity between them, in turn creating a sense of coherency between these two late plays which criticism has often been reluctant to see as connected to one another because doing so undermines *The Tempest*'s status as Shakespeare's 'farewell to the stage'.[105] Anthony Dawson notes that the fact *The Tempest* 'comes at the end of Shakespeare's career means that it will be read retrospectively, as climactic' (61). Indeed, critics often interpret the play as Shakespeare looking back over his career to date. This kind of assessment

[105] See McMullan, *Shakespeare* 65-126 who discusses and critiques in depth *The Tempest*'s status as Shakespeare's last play. See also Russ McDonald who explains that *The Two Noble Kinsmen's* perceived failure to conform to the Shakespearean romantic paradigm has often caused it to be ignored (14).

of *The Tempest* inevitably impacts on analyses of Shakespeare's thinking within it. Stephen W. Smith and Travis Curtwright, for example, write in their preface to *Shakespeare's Last Plays: Essays in Literature and Politics* that the romance plays:

> present Shakespeare's thinking at the very latest stage of its development, and as such they offer careful readers an opportunity to explore Shakespeare's final treatment of the subjects he so proactively probed in his earlier dramas, including tragedy, comedy, history, political philosophy, theology and the mystery of his own art. (xi)

Reading *The Tempest* alongside *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, however, helps us to reassess *The Tempest*'s position as climactic by demonstrating that Shakespeare's political thinking continues to develop beyond *The Tempest*. Certainly, in the case of fellow-feeling, *The Tempest* does not represent Shakespeare's 'final treatment' of this theme.

At the same time, our examination of *The Tempest* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* stresses continuities with Shakespeare's political thinking in the earlier comedies that this thesis has already explored. This stands in contrast with criticism of the romances which views them as 'reflections of the tragedies' (Jordan, *Monarchies* 12; Felperin) and argues for a sense of coherency throughout the comedies, from *The Comedy of Errors* through to *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. As well as highlighting the political implications of links between subjects, as previous chapters have done, whether this be in terms of trust or fellow-feeling in the context of consent, this chapter also stresses the ethical implications arising from a politics of community and the role the household plays within that, given the emphasis on Miranda's role as daughter, Hippolyta's as wife and Emilia's as wife-to-be.

1. Fellow-Feeling in Early Modern England

When it first comes into use in late sixteenth century England, the term fellow-feeling is closely related to the words sympathy and compassion. The word 'fellow-feeling' appears in a dictionary for the first time in Robert Cawdry's *A Table Alphabeticall* (1609) as a synonym, and explanation of the meaning, of compassion (Sig.C^{r}) and again in Randle Cotgrave's *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues* (1611) as a synonym of sympathy. Cotgrave describes the French word 'sympathie' as 'a symbolizing; natural consent or combination; mutuall passion, affection, disposition; a fellow-feeling' and the verb 'sympathizer' as meaning 'to sympathize, or have a fellow-feeling of, to jumpe with in passion, consent with in affection, agree with in disposition' (Sig.Ffffiij^{v}). The use of 'fellow-feeling' to describe sympathy registers a significant change in the meaning of the word sympathy itself. In his chapter on sympathy in Shakespeare's *Richard II*, Richard Meek tracks the change that the word undergoes in England from the late sixteenth-century to the early seventeenth-century. Sympathy was originally used to mean the attraction of like things to like and Meek notes that even as late as 1598, in John Florio's *A Worlde of Wordes,* 'the act of sympathising seems to have been regarded as an essentially passive phenomenon, in which a person, object or bodily part is affected by something or someone else' (132).[106] By the time of Cotgrave's *Dictionarie*, therefore, a significant transformation has taken place: sympathising has become 'an active and imaginative process' and the word sympathy is 'increasingly used to describe grief and fellow-feeling' (Meek 132). Fellow-feeling thus emerges as a term in its own right to describe this particular aspect of sympathy which deals with the active connection of one human being to another and, which can, as we shall see below, promote social action.

[106] See also Moyer for a history of the word sympathy in early modern England.

Most of the early uses of fellow-feeling occur in the context of Christian mercy and compassion, as an emotion which ties together members of the Christian community. Even within this Christian context, we see that fellow-feeling has the capacity to go beyond sympathizing because it results in a need for action. William Perkins, for example, highlights this in a sermon given in 1606 entitled *A Godly and Learned Exposition of the First Three Chapters of The Revelation*. When discussing the revelations shown to John the Apostle, Perkins reminds his audience that, at that time, the Christian church was under the persecution of the Roman emperor Domitian and, as such, John describes himself as a 'co-partner in affliction' with his fellow Christians. Perkins continues to comment:

> And the same affection should be in everie one of us towards the poore afflicted servants of Christ: seeing they bee our fellow members, wee should have a fellow-feeling with them, weeping with them that weepe, and shew our compassion in pittying them. If the foote be pricked, the head stoopes, the eye beholds and lookes on it, the finger puls it out, the hand applies the plaister, the other foote is readie to runne for helpe, the tongue to aske for counsell, & all the members are readie to affoord their mutuall helpe in pitie and fellow-feeling: so when any members of the church suffer affliction, be pricked with persecution for Christs cause; then should we as members of the same body, be readie to do all the helpe wee can to them, especially in shewing our fellow-feeling with them. (Sig.Fiij^{v-r})

Perkins here conveys the arising of fellow-feeling as an undeniable and natural consequence among 'fellow members' of the same community. He links the idea of fellow-feeling to the familiar metaphor of the members of the Church as a body with Christ as their head, whereby if one part of the body is hurt, another part of the body cannot fail to respond. Noticeably, the other parts of the body do not merely sympathise with the foot that has been pricked but take action in order to combat the problem, all working together in order to do so. In asking his audience to help 'members of the same body' by 'shewing our

fellow-feeling with them', Perkins is thus asking his audience to be prepared to take action as a result of fellow-feeling if necessary.

As well as its significance in a Christian setting, fellow-feeling plays an important role in early modern ethical writing in which it is applied to a variety of contexts. We witness this, for example, in Plutarch's *Moralia,* 'one of the most frequently cited and translated collections of "moral" texts' (Parker 44) in sixteenth century England and Europe.[107] Plutarch's considerable influence on Shakespeare is well-documented. Although critics tend to focus on the importance of Plutarch's *Lives* to Shakespeare's work, several have also recognised references to the *Moralia* in Shakespeare's plays, which he would have known through Philemon Holland's translation published in 1603.[108] In his translation, Holland uses the term 'fellow-feeling' no fewer than ten times, in contexts ranging from the way in which flatterers use an appearance of 'fellow-feeling of affection' (Sig.H3^{r}) to get what they want, to the necessity for wives to have fellow-feeling for their husbands (Sig.Dd3^{r}), to whether or not the soul has fellow-feeling with the passions and pain of the body (Sig.Aaaa6^{r}), to the benefit to statesmen of appearing to have fellow-feeling with all their subjects in times of sedition (Sig.Ii4^{r}). Particularly in this last example, fellow-feeling has important political consequences. Holland writes that, in the event of an open sedition between his subjects, a ruler must:

> Parley and common with both parties, without joyning your selfe to one more than to the other; by which meanes, neither you shall be thought an adversarie, because you are not ready to offend either part, but indifferent to both, in aiding as well the one as the other, and envie shall

[107] See also Burrow 211.

[108] For discussions of Plutarch's *Lives* in Shakespeare's work, see Burrow 215-239, Serpieri, and the special issue of *Poetica* edited by Mary Ann McGrail where most of the essays investigate the relationship between Shakespeare and the *Lives*. For discussions of the *Moralia* see Kerrigan 337-364, Parker and Colclough.

> you incur none, as bearing part in their miserie, in case you seeme to have a fellow-feeling and compassion equally with them all. (Sig.Ii4^{r})

The key to resolving conflict in this situation is for the ruler to be able to show 'fellow-feeling and compassion' with all his subjects equally and to make both sides believe that he 'bears part in their misery'. Plutarch implies that it does not matter whether this sense of fellow-feeling is genuine or not but the subjects have to believe that it is. Fellow-feeling is thus important here not as an emotion but for the political outcomes it is capable of achieving. Plutarch continues to advise his readers that the best way to resolve an open sedition is to try to make sure it does not break out in the first place and proceeds to proclaim the best method for ensuring 'the unitie and concord of citizens that always dwell together, and the banishing out of a city of all quarrels, all jarres and malice' (Sig.Ii4^{r}). The method he counsels as the most efficient way for doing this is very similar to what he has already recommended above. The ruler must deal:

> first with those parties which seeme to be most offended, and to have taken the greatest wrong, in seeming to be injuried as well as they, and to have no lesse cause of displeasure and discontent than they; afterwards by little and little to seeke for to pacifie and appease them. (Sig.Ii4^{r})

Again Plutarch invokes the need for fellow-feeling: the ruler must seem to be as 'injured' as and have 'no lesse cause of displeasure and discontent' than the dissenting party. Plutarch links fellow-feeling between subject and ruler, therefore, both implicitly and explicitly, to concord, demonstrating a key political function of fellow-feeling.

As a political bond between subjects, and its consequent link to concord, fellow-feeling correlates in some ways with civic friendship. Compared to the one soul in two bodies model of friendship, civic friendship is far more

inclusive as it aims to encompass all the citizens of the commonwealth. Sibyl Schwarzenbach concisely describes the main features of civic friendship as 'they wish each other well for their own sake, do things for fellow citizens both individually and as a citizen body, and share in values, goals, and a sense of justice' (97). Both Aristotle and Cicero emphasise the importance of civic friendship in their work. In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle makes a strong claim for the importance of civic friendship, particularly in terms of the link between civic friendship, community and justice, as we see when he writes that:

> Friendship and justice seem, as we said at the beginning, to be exhibited in the same sphere of conduct and between the same persons; because in every community there is supposed to be some kind of justice and also some friendly feeling. (8.9.1159b25-28 215)

Aristotle therefore represents friendship, justice and community as existing in a triad of interdependency with one another.[109] Cicero, meanwhile, in *De Amicitia,* makes a similar connection between friendship and concord. Shortly after discussing the 'true' and 'perfect' form of friendship that exists between two virtuous individuals, Cicero proceeds to expound friendship's universal importance:

> But if you shoulde take out of the worlde the knot of freendship, neither can there any house, neither any citie be able to continue, no not the tillage of the land can endure. And if this can not be understand herebi, yet of strife and debate it maie wel be perceived, howe great the power of concorde and freendship is. For what howse so stedie, or what citie stand so faste, but thorough hatered and strife, it may be utterlie

[109] Much has been written in recent years by those in the field of political philosophy about Aristotle's conception of civic friendship. See Devere and Smith for an overview. David Riesbeck in particular explores the connections between community, friendship and justice in Aristotle's *Ethics*, 45-96.

> overthrowen? Wherupon, how much goodnesse resteth in freendshippe, it maie be easily judged. (Sig. B8^{r}-C^{v})

Unlike the 'true' and 'perfect' form of friendship which Cicero depicts as an ideal to strive towards and which is rarely achieved in its entirety, he is at pains to emphasise that civic friendship is a fundamental element of every society, without which everything would fall apart.

Early modern writers and thinkers also recognised the significance of civic friendship and its political import. Louis Le Roy, for example, in his commentary on Aristotle's *Politics,* translated into English in 1598, makes clear the importance of friendship in a civic context when he writes that:

> Amity and friendship is the greatest of all goods and commodities that any City or Common-weale can attaine and come unto & the most apt thing to defend them from sedition and uproars. And Socrates dooth highly extoll the uniting of a City, which in his opinion seemeth to be the worke of friendship. (Sig.L3^{r})

Le Roy highlights the integral importance of friendship, not to individuals, but to the entire city and commonwealth. Moreover, Le Roy also points to the inherent political significance of friendship: not only does it defend the commonwealth from sedition, it is also necessary for its creation in the first place.

Fellow-feeling shares several characteristics with civic friendship. To return to Schwarzenbach's definition of the latter, fellow-feeling too requires that people should wish each other well for their own sake, do things for others individually as well as collaboratively and share in values, goals and justice. The key difference, however, is that early modern writers often only apply the discourse of civic friendship to those considered citizens in the traditional sense, in other words, to male householders. Fellow-feeling, however, has the ability to extend beyond the traditional bounds of citizenship due to the fact

that it is based on affective feeling rather than on status. Therefore fellow-feeling possesses a greater potential than civic friendship to link political subjects to one another because it begins from a greater level of inclusivity. Everyone has access to the emotions of sympathy and compassion within which fellow-feeling is rooted. Nevertheless, fellow-feeling also contains limits of its own, as we will see below.

2. *The Tempest's* Dialectical Exploration of Fellow-Feeling

In analyses of Shakespearean genre, critics usually define *The Tempest* as a romance, along with *Pericles, Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale*. More recently, the critical consensus is to view *The Tempest* as one of Shakespeare's late plays, a broader category which also encompasses *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, *Henry VIII* and the lost play, *Cardenio* (Chen). *The Tempest* displays many features associated with Shakespeare's late style and with the genre of romance, including thematic concerns with separation, union and journeying and a strong element of fantasy. Moreover, it follows the recognised pattern of the romances as moving from vengeance to forgiveness, which we will return to look at below.

Another key feature of the play in terms of its genre and its exploration of fellow-feeling is the self-reflective quality found in the romances. Jennifer Richards and James Knowles note in their introduction to *Shakespeare's Late Plays* that romance 'does not perceive its social world in any simple sense'. Following Rosalie Colie's assertion that we can view genre as a 'mode of thought', Richards and Knowles further explain that 'romance itself can be "thoughtful" and self-reflective, and even view its world from a variety of perspectives' (11). In other words, we can view the romances as thought experiments concerning the societies they depict. This seems particularly relevant for *The Tempest* which has long been considered Shakespeare's most

utopian play due to the fact that we can read the island as an imaginative space onto which the characters project their own ideas of the society they wish to live in (Palfrey 49). Thus the island also provides an appropriate space for a dialectical exploration of fellow-feeling.

2.1 'The Virtue of Compassion': Miranda's Fellow-Feeling

The play begins by demonstrating the potential of fellow-feeling to link political subjects to one another through the character of Miranda. Shakespeare demonstrates Miranda's capacity for fellow-feeling as soon as she appears on stage. As she watches the shipwreck wrought by the tempest, she cries out 'Oh, I have suffered / With those I saw suffer' (1.2.5-6), thereby articulating the very definition of fellow-feeling and emphasising it as both an active and imaginative process. Miranda is so moved by the sailors' plight that she pleads with her father:

> If by your art, my dearest father, you have
> Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them. (1.2.1-2)

Heather James and Leah Whittington have both noted that Miranda's fellow-feeling causes her to disagree with her father ('Dido's Ear', 360-361; 111) but, more than this, we can also read Miranda's plea here as a specific form of political action: the petition. Petitions formed an important part of political life in early modern England.[110] People addressed petitions to the sovereign and the Parliament in an attempt to 'enforce justice and equity' (Thorne 135). Annabel Patterson argues that we can describe early modern England as a 'petitioning society' due to the pervasiveness of petitions and their increasing influence in the time leading up to the 1628 Petition of Rights (57). Petitioning could also take place on more informal levels as David Zaret indicates when

[110] See R.W. Hoyle and Oldenburg. Oldenberg also discusses the prevalence of petitions on the early English stage.

he writes that 'the word *petition* was a common figure of speech, used literally and metaphorically to signify deferential request for favour or redress of grievance' (83). Petitions were a particularly important form of political representation for women because they allowed them an avenue to an 'otherwise restricted public commentary on political matters' (Zaret 88; see also Capp 306, Thorne 136-7). Although Miranda presents her petition orally to Prospero, she follows many of the rules given by Angel Day in his *English Secretorie* (1595) to his female readers for writing formal petition letters. Day, as James Daybell discusses in his book *The Material Letter in Early Modern England*, writes that a letter of petition should begin with praise of the addressee, following which the writer should emphasise their relationship with the party granting the request, in order to give them a reason to accede to the request (Daybell 70). In her speech to Prospero, Miranda follows exactly this structure: both praising him and emphasising her relationship to him as his daughter by addressing him as 'dearest father'. Angel Day proceeds to tell his readers that, after they have praised their addressee, they should go on to make their request which should be 'just, lawful and honest' and within the power of the addressee to perform (Daybell 70), as Miranda's is of Prospero. If he wants to, Prospero is more than capable of ending the storm.

Miranda then, however, veers away from the accepted practice: instead of expressing the 'gratitude' and 'thankful acknowledgement' (Daybell 70) she would give for the favour, as Day instructs his readers that they should, she proceeds to tell Prospero what she would have done, had she been able to do so:

> Had I been any god of power, I would
> Have sunk the sea within the earth, or ere
> It should the good ship so have swallowed and
> The fraughting souls within her. (1.2.10-13)

Lynne Magnusson, in her discussion of petitioning letters written by Elizabethan women, notes that there were two main approaches available for women to take in these letters. Either they could be letters of 'humility and entreaty' or they could be letters of 'supposal and assurance' (57). Miranda begins her oral petition to Prospero using a tone of humility and entreaty, addressing Prospero as 'dearest' and phrasing her request in the conditional with 'if'. Reflecting, however, upon the experience that those on the 'noble ship' have undergone, and seemingly experiencing their pain with them, she suddenly changes tack and employs a tone of assurance where she reflects upon what she herself would have done 'had I been a god of any power' rather than deferring to Prospero. As a result of her fellow-feeling towards those on the boat, Miranda imagines herself in a position of authority and makes clear that her actions in this situation would be very different to those of her father. Lynne Magnusson also notes that, while men most frequently petitioned for their own advancement, women were more likely to petition on behalf of others (56) as we see Miranda doing here. The idea of the petition as an appropriate means through which to channel the political potential of fellow-feeling, as well as the connection between fellow-feeling and femininity, are ideas that Shakespeare and Fletcher will develop even further in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*.

Similarly, when Ferdinand first arrives upon the island, Miranda is more than willing to advocate on his behalf although she has only just met him. When Prospero disarms Ferdinand of his sword and moves to tie him up, Miranda cries out that she'll 'be his surety' (1.2.474) to which Prospero responds 'What, / an advocate for an imposter? Hush!' (1.2.476). By standing as Ferdinand's 'surety', Miranda goes even further than she does in the case of the sailors because she does not just 'advocate' for him but ties her fate unhesitatingly to

his. Prospero's response to her declaration reveals how ridiculous he thinks it is to 'advocate for an imposter'. His choice of the word 'imposter' is intended to highlight that Ferdinand may be being deliberately deceitful. He continues to command Miranda 'Speak not for him' (1.2.500), as she has just done for the sailors. Although in this case, Miranda is responding exactly as her father would wish her to in feeling an immediate connection to Ferdinand, she does not know this. Shakespeare therefore portrays Miranda's fellow-feeling as a catalyst in allowing her to make connections with other political subjects. Her petition on behalf of the sailors and her plea to act as surety for Ferdinand are both unsuccessful in the sense that Prospero does not act upon them but they nevertheless demonstrate the potential of fellow-feeling as offering Miranda a path to political agency.

2.2 The Limits of Fellow-Feeling

As well as Miranda's display of fellow-feeling, however, we are presented with instances of its failure. Indeed, within the very same scene, our introduction to Caliban tests the limits of fellow-feeling as a political bond between subjects. In a speech which many early editors of the play attributed to Prospero, because they thought it too rough for the gentle Miranda, Miranda reprimands Caliban for his attempted rape of her:

> Abhorred slave,
> Which any print of goodness wilt not take,
> Being capable of all ill. I pitied thee,
> Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour
> One thing or other. When thou didst not, savage,
> Know thine own meaning, but wouldst gabble like
> A thing most brutish, I endowed thy purposes
> With words that made them known. But thy vile race,
> Though thou didst learn, had that in't which good natures
> Could not abide to be with; therefore wast thou

Deservedly confined into this rock,
Who hadst deserved more than a prison. (1.2.350-361)

Miranda's account of their early life on the island together contrasts in interesting ways with Caliban's own narration of this time:

When thou cam'st first
Thou strok'st me and made much of me; wouldst give me
Water with berries in't: and teach me how
To name the bigger light, and how the less,
That burn by day and night. And then I loved thee
And showed thee all the qualities o' th' isle:
The fresh springs, brine-pits, barren place and fertile. (1.2.332-338)

While they both agree that Miranda invested a lot of time and effort in teaching Caliban, the details of their accounts vary significantly. Caliban's account refers to the prehistory of their life together on the island before the action of the play begins. His speech contains a palpable sense of affection towards Miranda and Prospero and implies that they felt the same way about him because they 'strok'st me and made much of me'. Moreover, Caliban depicts their relationship as one of reciprocal obligation, a key part of all friendship discourses. He emphasises that he shows Prospero and Miranda 'all the qualities o' th' isle' in return for what they have already done for him when he says '*And then* I loved thee'. It is not clear whether he is using 'then' in a temporal or causal sense but, either way, his use of 'then' highlights that his willingness to help Prospero and Miranda become accustomed to life on the island resulted from what he perceived as their previous generous actions towards him.

Miranda's speech about Caliban, however, accentuates a very different aspect of his character and of their relationship with him. While Caliban presents himself as possessing a humane kindness, in Miranda's eyes he is 'savage' and 'brutish'. Their two different presentations of his character reflect the fact that

throughout the play, Caliban is alternately represented as human and monster. Miranda, for example, seems to refer to him as human when she describes Ferdinand as 'the third man that e'er I saw; the first / That e'er I sighed for' (1.2.444-445). Given that Miranda has already revealed that all she remembers from her previous life before arriving on the island are the 'four or five women once that tended me' (1.2.47), the other two men that she is referring to here must be Prospero and Caliban. Yet references to Caliban as monstrous also proliferate in the play, originating not only from Prospero who describes him as being 'got by the devil himself' (1.2.319) and 'a devil, a born devil' (4.1.188) but also from Trinculo and Sebastian who think him to be a 'strange fish' (2.2.26) and refer to him constantly as a monster. As a result of this inherent ambiguity in the text, Caliban can be portrayed in performance in a myriad of ways. He can be portrayed as a monstrous, not fully human being who did attempt to rape Miranda with the full intention of peopling 'this isle with Calibans' (1.2.350), highlighting the 'savage' aspects of his character that Miranda illuminates in her speech. Portrayals of this type which often use 'fins, fish scales, tortoise shells, fur, skin diseases, floppy puppy ears and apelike brows, to name just a few' as ways of signifying Caliban's inhumanity were the most common in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries (Vaughn 34). The other broad category into which portrayals of Caliban often fall is that of Caliban as victim, who is undeservedly vilified by Prospero and Miranda. In this type of portrayal, Caliban's speech quoted above can be used to reveal Caliban's essentially human and kind nature. Performances of the play can also, of course, choose to reflect the text's ambiguity and include elements of both aspects. In terms of fellow-feeling, Caliban is denied inclusion either because his 'vile race' inherently makes him too different from Prospero and Miranda for them to ever consider themselves fellows with him

or because he highlights his difference from them in his ethical and moral disregard when he attempts to rape Miranda.

However we choose to read Caliban's character, Miranda's speech makes clear that after the attempted rape has taken place, any illusion Caliban had of his inclusion within the community is destroyed, whether deservedly so or not. His exclusion is both visually and physically signified when he is styed 'in this hard rock' (1.2.343). Moreover, Prospero also excludes Caliban from the idea of community as based on affective feeling when he addresses him as:

> Thou most lying slave,
> Whom stripes may move, not kindness. (1.2.344-45)

As Julia Reinhard Lupton points out, Caliban is in fact one of the characters in the play with the deepest capacity for expressing emotion ('Creature' 12), as we see, for example, in his famously poetic description of the island when he tells Stephano and Trinculo to 'be not afeard' (3.2.128) of the noises they are hearing. Prospero's use of the word kindness has two different meanings: on the one hand, he is using kindness in the sense of benevolence but, on the other hand, Prospero could also be using kindness in the sense of kinship. Shakespeare earlier plays on these two meanings of kindness in *The Merchant of Venice*, for example, when Shylock claims of the bond he proposes to Antonio 'this is kind I offer' (1.3.135). The words 'kind' and 'kindness' are then reiterated throughout the rest of the conversation to highlight Shylock's contradictory status as both insider and outsider of Venice. Similarly, Prospero's use of the word, and his claim that Caliban can only be moved by physical punishment, denies Caliban's eligibility to be a recipient of fellow-feeling because he does not possess the core requirement of an ability to feel emotion. Prospero thus designates him as an outsider, excluding him from kinship and from any sense of connection with other political subjects.

Caliban's role and his treatment in the play reveals there are some obstacles that fellow-feeling cannot overcome.

The limits of fellow-feeling are also revealed in Caliban's relations with Stephano and Trinculo, as well as in the machinations of Antonio and Sebastian. When Caliban meets Stephano and Trinculo he manages to persuade them to join him in his plot to murder Prospero. He frames his pitch to Stephano in terms of the benefits he and Trinculo will gain from a successful outcome of the plot: namely, the possession of Miranda whom Caliban tells Stephano 'will become thy bed, I warrant, / And bring thee forth a brave brood' (3.2.98-99). Caliban recognises that Stephano and Trinculo are more likely to be driven by self-motivation, rather than any consideration for the treatment Caliban himself has suffered or for the good of the island. Even this plan fails to work however. At the crucial moment, Prospero distracts Stephano and Trinculo from their attempt to murder him by placing in their way a wardrobe of clothing. Caliban desperately tries to warn them 'we shall lose our time / And all be turned to barnacles, or to apes / With foreheads villainous low' (4.1.244-46) but they ignore him, intent on stealing away the clothes. Prospero's plan to distract Stephano and Trinculo from their plot to murder him is therefore successful because Stephano and Trinculo prioritise their own individual desires over those of the larger group vision. This is ironically highlighted in the final scene when, after the three of them have been herded onto the stage by Ariel to face Prospero, Stephano drunkenly proclaims: 'Every man shift for all the rest, and let no man take care for himself; for all is but fortune' (5.1.259-60), highlighting that they took exactly the opposite action. Similarly, in a parallel plot, Antonio and, more reluctantly, Sebastian prioritise their own interests over those of the group when planning to kill Alonso and Gonzalo, reflecting in turn the courtiers' lack of fellow-feeling with

the mariners in the opening scene. Their refusal to follow the boatswain's orders because to do so would not be in keeping with their status as courtiers threatens not only their own lives but those of everyone on the ship.

Thus, after having set up fellow-feeling as an avenue through which political subjects can be connected to one another, Shakespeare also probes its limits by depicting several scenarios in which it faces an object it cannot overcome or loses to self-interestedness. Caliban highlights his difference from Prospero and Miranda in terms of morals and ethics when he attempts to rape Miranda, leading him to be permanently excluded from the island community. Meanwhile in the characters of Stephano, Trinculo, Antonio and Sebastian self-interestedness dominates over any feelings of allegiance to the rest of the group. The play probes further the relationship between fellow-feeling, inclusion and exclusion through Ariel's instrumental role in prompting Prospero to forgiveness.

2.3 Prospero, Fellow-Feeling and Forgiveness

Having illuminated both its potential impact and its limits, Shakespeare further complicates *The Tempest*'s exploration of fellow-feeling in the play's final scene. Two expressions of fellow-feeling are required to bring about the play's resolution: firstly, that of Prospero's servant Ariel and secondly, that of Prospero himself.

In keeping with the play's dialectical approach, Shakespeare first highlights Prospero's apparent lack of capacity for fellow-feeling in Act 3, Scene 3, a scene which in many ways parallels Act 5, Scene 1. As in the final scene, Prospero comes face to face with his enemies and Ariel's role in the scene's events is key. In contrast to the final scene, however, in Act 3, Scene 3 Prospero hides from his enemies and is completely focused on revenge. Employing Ariel as a harpy

and as a spokesperson, Prospero conveys to the courtiers that he has 'made you mad' (3.3.59) because 'you three / From Milan did supplant good Prospero' (3.3.70-71). Fellow-feeling could not be further from Prospero's mind at this moment. Ariel's appearance as a harpy, and the tables of food which appear only to disappear, make clear the scene's debt to the harpy episode in Book III of Virgil's *Aeneid* in which Aeneid and his men land on the shores of the Strophades.[111] Hungry, they begin to eat the goats and cattle that they find on the shore, unaware that the goats belong to the harpies, in recompense for which the harpies swoop down upon them with their talons. Aeneas and his men are unable to fight the harpies off. Similarly, Ariel jeers to the Italian courtiers in his/her form as a harpy that s/he is invincible. In the *Aeneid*, the harpies act on the command of their leader Calaeno, a prophetess and the eldest of the Furies, in the same way that Ariel acts on Prospero's command. In the speech she makes to Aeneas, Virgil highlights Calaeno's drive for revenge, who prophesies that, in retribution for the cattle and goats that they slaughtered, Aeneas and his men 'will not surround the city granted you with walls / until dire hunger, and the sin of striking at us, force you / to consume your very tables with devouring jaws' (3.255-57).[112] The parallels with the *Aeneid* thus place Prospero in the position of Calaeno and emphasise his equally overriding need for revenge. We see Prospero revelling in his power and his hold over his enemies when he says:

> My high charms work,
> And these mine enemies are all knit up
> In their distractions. They now are in my power;
> And in these fits I leave them. (3.3.89-92)

[111] For more on this and other references to the *Aeneid* in *The Tempest* see chapter 6 in James, *Shakespeare's Troy*, Hamilton and Whittington.
[112] All quotations from the *Aeneid* are taken from Virgil, *Aeneid* trans. David West.

Unlike Calaeno, who makes her speech to Aeneas and his men and then leaves them, allowing them to depart the island, Prospero leaves his enemies 'in these fits' as a further exemplification of the strength of his power. Prospero's drive for revenge is even stronger than Calaeno's. We see this also in the fact that not only does he terrify the Italian courtiers but he is also responsible for bringing them onto the island in the first place whereas in the *Aeneid*, although Aeneas also lands on the island due to a storm, the storm has not been engineered by Calaeno. Moreover, Calaeno's desire for revenge results from her sense of duty to the harpies as their leader as we see when she emphasises in her speech that Aeneas and his men will be punished for 'driving the innocent harpies from their father's country' (3.249). Prospero, however, desires revenge for himself alone, highlighting that, even when it comes to revenge, rather than petitioning, women are more likely to act on behalf of others. Calaeno's acting on the harpies' behalf reveals a sense of fellow-feeling with them which Prospero, at this stage in the play, does not share with anyone on the island of *The Tempest*.

Prospero's demeanour in Act 3, Scene 3 forms a significant contrast with his demeanour in the final scene. In Act 5, Scene 1, as Act 3, Scene 3, Prospero's enemies are entirely in his power. Rather than seeking revenge on them, however, Prospero forgives them for their wrongs and, looking at Gonzalo, declares 'mine eyes e'en sociable to the show of thine, / Fall fellowly drops' (5.1.63-4). We must therefore consider what happens between these two scenes to make Prospero eschew his need for vengeance in favour of fellow-feeling.

Ariel's role is key, not only to precipitating Prospero's fellow-feeling in the final scene but also prior to this. Like Caliban, Ariel was already present on the island when Prospero and Miranda arrived. In contrast to Caliban, however, who is treated as a slave never to be released, Ariel is portrayed as a

servant, with a defined contract, who will be freed when the contract is up. More significantly, unlike Caliban, Ariel is not deprived of her/his ability to feel emotion. In fact Prospero plays on Ariel's emotions in order to keep her/him under control. When Ariel is reluctant to obey his commands, Prospero reminds her/him of the:

> Torment I did find thee in: thy groans
> Did make wolves howl, and penetrate the breasts
> Of ever-angry bears. It was a torment
> To lay upon the damned, which Sycorax
> Could not again undo. It was mine art,
> When I arrived and heard thee, that made gape
> The pine and let thee out. (1.2.287-293)

In contrast to Caliban, Ariel is 'but air' and thus cannot be punished physically. Prospero here aims to invoke a sense of terror and fear in Ariel, transporting her/him back to how s/he felt in the days of Sycorax, in order to then heighten Ariel's sense of gratitude towards him for freeing her/him. He highlights the pain Ariel suffered by emphasizing that it was so extreme, the wolves and bears howled in sympathy with her/him, creatures not known for their sympathetic qualities. Prospero's words, rather than Ariel's own memory, stir up feelings of this previous 'torment', a word Prospero says twice within three lines for emphasis. By highlighting to Ariel that it was 'mine art' that freed her/him, Prospero simultaneously reminds Ariel all s/he owes to him as well as stressing the strength of his power.

However, as the play proceeds, we see that, as well as Prospero controlling Ariel's emotions, Ariel also displays the ability to evoke emotions within Prospero. David Schalkwyk notes that *The Tempest* is the only Shakespearean play in which the question 'do you love me?' is asked, not once but twice (110). The first time takes place within a context we would expect, in a conversation between two lovers, although it is unconventional in the sense that the female,

Miranda, rather than the male, Ferdinand, asks the question. The second occasion occurs when Ariel, just as Prospero instructs her/him to set up the wedding masque, asks Prospero: 'do you love me master? No?' (4.1.48) to which Prospero replies 'Dearly, my delicate Ariel' (4.1.49). The timing of Ariel's question 'do you love me?' is significant because it occurs just as Prospero is preparing to agree to Miranda and Ferdinand's engagement. Prospero, reminded of the possibility of a life of complete isolation without even his daughter for company, happily receives Ariel's gesture of affection and implied companionship. By opening himself to affection towards Ariel as his servant, Prospero paves the way for his receptiveness towards fellow-feeling and the consequent forgiveness that results from that.

Following on from this, Ariel manages to awaken a sense of fellow-feeling from Prospero towards his 'enemies' who lie at his 'mercy' (4.1.260) in the final scene. Prospero asks Ariel 'how fares the king and's followers?' (5.1.7), to which Ariel responds that they are all prisoners:

> The King,
> His brother, and yours abide all three distracted,
> And the remainder mourning over them,
> Brimful of sorrow and dismay; but chiefly,
> Him that you termed, sir, the good old Lord Gonzalo.
> His tears run down his beard like winter's drops
> From eaves of reeds. Your charm so strongly works 'em
> That if you now beheld them, your affections
> Would become tender. (5.1.11-19)

This is the first time in the play Prospero has asked Ariel an open question, prior to this he asks her/him only closed questions, usually about whether or not s/he has performed his required duties. His asking of this question therefore gives Ariel the chance to express an opinion on the acts s/he has been asked to carry out and her/his fellow-feeling for the prisoners is implicit in this

speech. Rather than petitioning Prospero, as Miranda does, Ariel takes a more indirect approach. S/he creates an evocative picture of the state of Prospero's 'enemies' and strategically singles out 'the good old lord Gonzalo' as her/his focus because s/he knows Prospero feels most affinity with him.

Significantly, however, Prospero is moved just as much by Ariel's sense of compassion itself as he is by Gonzalo's plight. He responds to Ariel 'Dost thou think so spirit?' (5.1.19) to which Ariel replies 'Mine would, sir, were I human' (5.1.20), prompting Prospero to announce:

> Hast thou, which are but air, a touch, a feeling
> Of their afflictions, and shall not myself -
> One of their kind, that relish all as sharply
> Passion as they - be kindlier moved than thou art?
> Though with their high wrongs I am struck to th' quick,
> Yet with my nobler reason 'gainst my fury
> Do I take part. The rarer action is
> In virtue than in vengeance. (5.1.21-28)

Shakespeare here again plays on the two different meanings of 'kind' as he did earlier in relation to Caliban, using 'kindlier' in the sense both of more benevolently and in the sense that Prospero is closer in kin to the courtiers than Ariel is, both because one of them is his brother and because Ariel is 'but air'. Ariel's status as being 'but air', in other words her/his difference from Prospero, is what motivates Prospero to fellow-feeling because it allows him to reconsider the boundaries of 'kin'. If Ariel, who is not 'kin' with the courtiers, can be moved by their plight then so too, Prospero thinks, should he be. Equally significant is the fact that fellow-feeling is here successful because it becomes a collaborative act: both Ariel's and Prospero's fellow-feeling are required in order to motivate Prospero to forgiveness. In responding to Ariel in such a manner, Prospero shows that he values her/his opinion to such an extent that it influences his own. The collaborative nature of fellow-feeling is

an idea that Shakespeare and Fletcher will further develop in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*.

Immediately after this, Prospero makes his well-known speech renouncing his use of magic, suggesting that Prospero's experience of fellow-feeling and his giving up of his magic go hand-in-hand. Prospero's magic makes him different from his fellows and therefore incapable of experiencing the obligations of fellow-feeling. In order to experience them, he must give his magic up. Prospero's renunciation speech, as has long been recognised, is closely modelled upon Arthur Golding's 1567 English translation of Medea's speech from Book 7 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Scholars often read Medea as a character, and this speech in particular, as exemplifying the dark side of magic and hence as revealing the necessity for Prospero to abjure his 'rough magic' (5.1.50). Jonathan Bate, for example, writes that 'Medea's powers are summoned up not so that they can be exercised, but so that they can be rejected' and that Prospero gives up his magic because he recognises it to be 'the selfsame black magic as that of Medea' (252). Considering more closely the context of Medea's speech in the *Metamorphoses*, however, may allow us to come to a different conclusion. Although Medea will later be motivated only by revenge, as Prospero earlier was, Medea is invoking her magic in the speech in question not for the purposes of evil, but for the purposes of good. She and Jason have only just returned from their quest for the Golden Fleece, in which Medea's help is key, when Jason realizes that his father, Aeson, is ill. Reluctant to ask Medea for further help, Jason nevertheless pleads with her to try and save his father's life. In response to Jason's request, Ovid tells us that Medea 'was moved by Jason's love for his father' (*mota est pietate rogantis* (7.169)) and

consequently agrees to try and save Aeson's life.[113] As Prospero is moved by Ariel's compassion, Medea is moved by her husband's love for his father. Therefore, the point of correlation between Prospero and Medea at this moment is not their 'rough magic' but rather that they are motivated by a sense of duty and responsibility towards others, in turn emphasising fellow-feeling's necessity in Prospero's abjuration of his magic and willingness to forgive.

The tempered success of Prospero's forgiveness paradoxically reveals the success and impact of Ariel's moving Prospero to fellow-feeling. Although Prospero initially bids Alonso and his company 'a hearty welcome' (5.1.111) and embraces Gonzalo as his 'noble friend' (5.1.120), it is not long before his willingness to forgive becomes strained. Immediately after addressing Gonzalo, he turns to Sebastian and Antonio and, in an aside, warns them:

> Were I so minded,
> I here could pluck his highness' frown upon you
> And justify you traitors. (5.1.127-129)

Focusing his attention solely on Antonio, Prospero then agrees to forgive his 'rankest fault' (5.1.132). This forgiveness, however, is somewhat undermined by his declaration that to call Antonio brother 'would even infect my mouth' (5.1.131). On the one hand, we can read this as Sebastian and Antonio being punished for their lack of fellow-feeling but, on the other hand, Prospero's growing reluctance to forgive after his initial expression of fellow-feeling emphasises that he would not have been willing to forgive at all without being prompted by Ariel.

[113] All quotations from the *Metamorphoses* are taken from the Latin text of *The Metamorphoses* available on *The Latin Library,* online.

Critics of the play have often commented on the movement of its trajectory from revenge to forgiveness. Indeed, such a pattern is thought to be representative of the romances as a whole, not only *The Tempest*. Robert G. Hunter was the first to use the term 'comedies of forgiveness' for the romances, although he also includes 'the problem plays' within this category as well as *Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*. More recently, Sarah Beckwith traces the evolution of a 'grammar of forgiveness' through the comedies and the tragedies but finds its full manifestation in the romances: *Pericles, Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*.[114] In motivating Prospero to forgiveness, fellow-feeling is thus structurally important in the play as well as thematically. This is emphasised in the play's epilogue where Prospero turns to the audience and asks them:

> Let me not,
> Since I have my dukedom got
> And pardoned the deceiver, dwell
> In this bare island by your spell,
> But release me from my bands
> With the help of your good hands. (5-10)

Prospero asks for the audience's collaboration to help him end the play and noticeably he centres this collaboration on the fact that he has 'pardoned the deceiver'. The epilogue therefore sets up forgiveness, both Prospero's and the audience's, as a self-imposed goal of the play. Without forgiveness, and the fellow-feeling that leads to it, Prospero would not be able to be released from 'my bands'.

[114] Beckwith, however, refers to the romances as 'post-tragedies'. Michael Friedman also uses the term 'comedy of forgiveness' but excludes the romances completely from his use of the term, focusing only on *The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Much Ado About Nothing* and *Measure for Measure*.

The Tempest as whole, therefore, endorses the necessity for fellow-feeling but by no means whole-heartedly. In the end, Ariel's act of fellow-feeling, a servant and non-human being, is effective in bringing about a political action, not Miranda's. On the one hand, this stands as a strong statement of the inclusivity of fellow-feeling and its effectiveness in the right circumstance. In a way, the success of Ariel's fellow-feeling mitigates Caliban's earlier exclusion from its realms. On the other hand, however, the pervasiveness of sentiments antithetical to fellow-feeling throughout the play illustrates that it is not easy to create the circumstances needed for its effectiveness. At the end of the play, Prospero is ready to return to his role as the Duke of Milan and our thoughts turn to the future as everyone prepares to depart from the island. Shakespeare closes the play with a sense of optimism when Prospero announces in the last scene to all present 'This thing of darkness I / Acknowledge mine' (5.1.278-79), in reference to Caliban. Prospero thereby indicates that, at last, he is willing to include Caliban in some form of fellow-feeling by taking responsibility for him and allowing us to imagine that, when he returns to Milan, he might adopt a different form of rule than he did previously.

3. Collaboration and Fellow-Feeling in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*

The Two Noble Kinsmen further develops many aspects of fellow-feeling that we have already seen in *The Tempest*, particularly those that appear in relation to Miranda's role. For example, fellow-feeling in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* also results in the political action of the petition and is far more explicitly gendered as feminine. It is also portrayed as a far more collaborative act in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*: rather than only one person petitioning, several people act together in order to achieve success. On the whole, fellow-feeling in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* is more successful than in *The Tempest* and this success is reflected in

its even greater structural importance to the play: not only is an action resulting from fellow-feeling needed to begin the play but it is also instrumental at the play's turning point in Act 3, Scene 6. Nevertheless the play does not completely endorse the power of fellow-feeling and highlights its limits in a different and perhaps even more foundational way than *The Tempest* does. In the end, the play shows it as effective in giving women political power to act for others but as much less effective in giving them political power to act for themselves.

While the epilogue to *The Tempest* requires the audience's collaboration to end the play, the prologue to *The Two Noble Kinsmen* requires their collaboration in order to begin, foreshadowing the fact that in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* fellow-feeling is depicted as a particularly collaborative act. Acknowledging Chaucer's *The Knight's Tale* as the main source for the play, the speaker of the prologue declares that to aspire to Chaucer's level was 'too ambitious' (23), resulting in the play's performers 'swim[ming] / in this deep water' (24-5). The speaker then instructs the audience:

> Do but you hold out
> Your helping hands, and we shall tack about
> And something do to save us. (25-27)

The audience's help is integral in getting the play started. Significantly, the speaker refers to several different levels of collaboration in the course of the prologue. As well as that between the audience and the playing company, the speaker also refers to the collaboration occurring in the play between the playwrights and Chaucer, a collaboration he depicts as not entirely successful due to Chaucer's eminence and hence requiring the aid of the audience in turn meaning that the different levels of collaboration interact. Implicitly, the speaker also refers to the collaboration between the playwrights themselves:

while the 'we' of the prologue ostensibly refers to the actors, we can also plausibly see it as referring to the playwrights, setting up collaboration as an idea that runs throughout the play on several different levels.

3.1 Fellow-Feeling, Collaboration and Gender

The collaborative nature of fellow-feeling in the play is evident from the very first scene. When the three queens approach Theseus to rescue their husbands' corpses from the battlefield, they rely on fellow-feeling to spur Theseus into action. Notably, they depend not only on Theseus' own fellow-feeling but also that of Hippolyta and Emilia. Like Miranda in *The Tempest*, they rely on the form of the petition to make their wishes known. In contrast to Miranda, however, their petition does not result from fellow-feeling but rather aims to inspire it in its listeners. Thus, whereas Miranda in her petition focuses very much on her own reaction to the sailors' plight, the widows concentrate on evoking the emotions of their listeners. In Chaucer's *The Knight's Tale*, one widow speaks on behalf of all, while the rest 'fillen gruf and criden piteously' (949).[115] Contrastingly, in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, each of the women speak, addressing not only Theseus with their petition but his companions, his bride-to-be Hippolyta, and her sister Emilia, too. Each widow very carefully crafts and tailors her petition to her addressee in order to win as many advocates to their cause as possible. The first queen begins by appealing to Theseus 'for pity's sake and true gentility' (1.1.25). Shakespeare and Fletcher's word choice here echoes Chaucer's description of the incident in *The Knight's Tale* in two ways. Firstly, it mirrors the plea of the widow to Theseus who asks him to have 'som drope of pitee, thurgh thy gentillesse' (920). The widows in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* are therefore appealing to a reputation that precedes Theseus

[115] All quotations from *The Knight's Tale* are taken from *The Riverside Chaucer* ed. Larry Benson.

both within the context of the play itself and in intertextual terms. Even more significantly, the widow's plea also echoes the narrator's description of Theseus' reaction to the petition in *The Knight's Tale*:

> This gentil duc doun from his courser sterte
> With herte pitous, whan he herde them speke. (952-53)

While, in *The Knight's Tale*, Theseus is instantly willing to grant the widows' request, in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, although he declares the widows' tale 'gives me such lamenting / As wakes my vengeance and revenge for 'em' (1.1.57-58), he does not immediately take action, instead telling the widows 'troubled I am' (1.1.77) and turning away from them. The verbal echoes between the two texts emphasise the different responses of Theseus in each. Most notably, in *The Knight's Tale*, Theseus himself is moved by a 'herte pitous' to answer the widows' plea but in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* he does not possess such a 'herte'. As such, Theseus' lack of fellow-feeling necessitates the intervention of Emilia and Hippolyta who become the main bearers of fellow-feeling instead. We witness further that Shakespeare and Fletcher deliberately decide to allocate more importance to Emilia's and Hippolyta's role by another modification they make to their sources. In both the *Teseida* and *The Knight's Tale*, Theseus and Hippolyta are already married by the time they meet the widows. In *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, however, the widows interrupt the couple's procession on their way to be married. Although he is willing to take action on the widows' behalf, Theseus is reluctant to do so before his wedding ceremony and attendant celebrations, proclaiming that his wedding is a service 'greater than any war' (1.1.172), without any apparent awareness of the irony that it took a war for him to procure his bride. The widows therefore require Hippolyta's and Emilia's help in order to achieve their goal, setting up fellow-feeling as

not only politically effective but also as a collaborative force specifically between women.

The dialogue throughout the scene consistently locates fellow-feeling's effectiveness in its ability to create a community between women who collectively can have much more political force than they could do individually. Although Hippolyta responds sympathetically to the widows, Emilia in particular is singled out as the bastion of fellow-feeling, both by the widows themselves and by Shakespeare and Fletcher. While the widows ask Theseus and Hippolyta, as King and soon-to-be Queen, to 'hear and respect me' (1.1.26; 1.1.28), they ask Emilia to 'be advocate / for us and our distresses' (1.1.31-32). The widows recognise that Emilia's lower status in comparison to Hippolyta and Theseus means that she is more likely to advocate for their cause. Emilia agrees, however, not only to represent them but to join with them in solidarity. She responds to their petition by exclaiming:

> No knees to me.
> What woman I may stead that is distressed
> Does bind me to her. (1.1.35-37)

In the image of the three queens kneeling to Theseus, Hippolyta and Emilia, the three of them for a moment appear visually to command the same power and respect. This moment does not last for long as Theseus and Hippolyta tell the queens to 'stand up' or to 'rise' (1.1.34). Emilia however goes one step further by commanding them 'no knees to me'. She recognises kneeling as a symbol of subjugation and refuses to allow it, wishing the queens to stand on equal status with her. By so doing, Emilia institutes a dynamic of equality and interdependence between the women. Her response implies that they do not need to petition her. Their distress alone, and Emilia's fellow-feeling in

response to it, is enough to prompt Emilia's desire to help. Noticeably, she bases her willingness to help the widows on the fact that they are women.

Similarly, later in the scene, Emilia emphasises that her response to the queens is motivated by the fact that they are fellow women. When the third Queen proceeds to make her petition to Emilia, she finds herself so overtaken by emotion that she is unable to reflect the depths of her sorrows in words. Emilia reassures her 'being a natural sister of our sex / Your sorrow beats so ardently upon me / That it shall make a counter-reflect 'gainst / My brother's heart and warm it to some pity, / Though it were made of stone' (1.1.125-129). Again, Emilia does not require the widow to fully articulate her request in order to be moved by it: that the widow is a 'natural sister of our sex' is enough to gain her help without the need for the widow to precisely word her petition. Emilia's imagery of herself as a mirror, reflecting the beams of the widow's sorrow onto Theseus to warm his stone heart, is noteworthy because it suggests that she is fully aware of her position as a conduit to Theseus' fellow-feeling and the role of her fellow-feeling as being a means to an end rather than an end in itself. At the same time, Emilia's metaphorical language also highlights the indispensable nature of her role. By reflecting the widow's sorrow, she also strengthens it, thereby emphasising again the collaborative nature of fellow-feeling. In these words we can also detect a reference to Theseus' 'herte pitous' in *The Knight's Tale*, illuminating the necessity for Emilia's intervention to make Theseus feel pity where none is required in Chaucer's version of the tale.

The move from the Globe theatre to the indoor Blackfriars theatre in 1608 provides one of the reasons for Fletcher and Shakespeare's focus on the female perspective in this play. Scholars of Shakespeare's romances have argued that the move between theatres influenced Shakespeare's transition from tragedy

to romance due to the fact that the playing space of the Blackfriars differed in many ways from that of the Globe. For example, the fact of it being indoors required the use of candles for lighting which not only offered the opportunity of lighting effects not possible in the Globe, lit only by daylight, but also necessitated breaks in order to replace the candles (McMullan, 'What?' 8; Lindley 30). Other new possibilities for staging included the use of flying mechanisms in the roof (McMullan, 'What?' 8) and more frequent use of music. We can see many of these innovations in staging at work in *The Tempest* which is the most musical of Shakespeare's plays and which would have made use of the flying mechanism for Ariel's part.[116]

Most relevant here, however, is the fact that the Blackfriars theatre attracted a different type of audience in comparison to the Globe. Andrew Gurr writes:

> The acquisition of the Blackfriars altered company practices quite dramatically. One reason was the prevalence of women in Blackfriars audiences compared with the Globe. Commentators began to write more and more about the women in the audiences, and the plays written for the new repertory started providing a woman-centred perspective. (11)

This certainly seems to be the case for *The Two Noble Kinsmen* which, despite being a play about male friendship, often provides us with a female perspective. Indeed Gurr also notes that 'all Fletcher's plays were strongly woman-centred' (11). The strength of the female perspective in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* can be seen not only in the play's depiction of fellow-feeling, but also in the way that Fletcher and Shakespeare transform Chaucer's Emelye. *The Knight's Tale* only once provides the action from Emelye's point of view: when

[116] See Dustagheer 101-138 for a detailed discussion of the differences between the playing spaces of the Globe and Blackfriars and the subsequent spatial innovations we can detect in *The Tempest* which, she argues, Shakespeare created as 'a play with performance duality suitable for both the company's theatres' (138).

she is praying to Diana that she will be allowed to keep her virginity. Up until this point, the narrator reveals nothing about what Emelye feels about Palamon and Arcite's rivalry over her. In *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, in contrast, Shakespeare and Fletcher introduce Emilia's childhood friendship with her maid early on, both to set it up as a parallel to the male friendships in the play and to convey her preference for female company over male company, foreshadowing her reluctance to marry and her willingness to aid her fellow women. By encouraging a 'women-centred perspective', we can see the theatrical environs of the Blackfriars as influencing Fletcher and Shakespeare's exploration of a specifically female political agency in the play.

Emilia's readiness to help the widows does not come without risks to herself, however. Her bargaining power with Theseus lies in the fact that she is not yet married. Having been persuaded to help the widows, Emilia herself then issues a petition to Theseus on their behalf. This petition takes the form of a threat, wherein Emilia claims that if Theseus does not grant the widows' request, she will not dare to 'be so hardy / Ever to take a husband' (1.1.204-5). Similarly, the queens initially appeal to Emilia 'for the love of him whom Jove hath marked / The honour of your bed' (1.1.29-30). By founding her petition to Theseus on the fact of her marriage, Emilia compromises her ability in future to refuse a marriage of Theseus' choosing and therefore willingly risks her unmarried status in the aid of strangers. We will investigate further below how much she ends up sacrificing due to her willingness to act on the basis of fellow-feeling to aid others.

Hippolyta's role in the first scene forms an interesting counterpoint to that of Emilia in terms of the gendered nature of fellow-feeling. As the former Queen of the Amazons, Hippolyta herself was, until very recently, the lead representative of an all-female community. The second queen, who petitions

Hippolyta, registers the tension between her past situation and her present one, by appealing to her 'for your mother's sake / and as you wish your womb may thrive with fair ones, / Hear and respect me' (1.1.26-28). In appealing to Hippolyta for 'her mother's sake', the second queen recognises that Hippolyta has thus far lived in a matrilineal tradition. By referring to a future, however, where her 'womb may thrive with fair ones', the second queen references Hippolyta's new role as Theseus' wife and producer of his heirs.

The second queen continues to evoke this tension throughout her speech, highlighting the tension in Hippolyta's position more generally. She does so particularly when she asks Hippolyta to 'Speak't in a woman's key, like such a woman / As any of us three. Weep ere you fail. / Lend us a knee' (1.1.94-96). That the second queen asks Hippolyta specifically to speak 'like such a woman / As any of us three' is significant in light of Hippolyta's history as a 'most dreaded Amazonian' (1.1.78). The second queen begins her speech by reminding Hippolyta of her previous prowess in war as an Amazonian warrior whose arm was 'as strong / as it is white' (1.1.79-80). This brief physical description highlights Hippolyta's exceptional status as Queen of the Amazons: her arm is strong as befits a warrior and therefore a male but nevertheless white as befits a woman of the nobility. The queen recognises that Hippolyta still retains the martial qualities of the Amazonians when she addresses her as a 'soldieress, / That equally canst poise sternness with pity' (1.1.85-86). Moreover, she appeals to Hippolyta's background as a warrior by asking her to tell Theseus what she would do if she were in the same situation as the queens and Theseus 'I'th' blood-sized field lay swollen / Showing the sun his teeth' (1.1.99-100). In referring to such details as the teeth of Theseus' imagined dead body, the queen is making use of the rhetorical technique of *enargia*, a 'visually powerful description that vividly recreates something or

someone in words' (Lanham 64, qtd. in Thorne 136). Alison Thorne writes that *enargia* was a common feature of petitions composed by women, used by the petitioner to try to make the recipient imagine themselves in their shoes, or, in other words, to evoke fellow-feeling in them (136). We might also note that Ariel in *The Tempest* uses this same technique when, as we have seen, s/he creates a vivid image of the tearful Gonzalo for Prospero in order to evoke his empathy. Knowing that Hippolyta is no stranger to the battlefield, the queen recognises that such gruesome imagery is more likely to appeal to, rather than repulse, her.

By asking Hippolyta, however, to speak to Theseus as a woman 'as any of us three', the second queen is specifically asking her *not* to use her strength or 'sternness' as an Amazonian but instead to make use of her new found rhetorical hold over Theseus and her 'pity', a distinctly feminine quality. The second queen therefore paradoxically illuminates the strength of female collective power at the same time as putting limits on it. She knows that having Hippolyta speak on their behalf will strengthen their case but by specifying that it should be 'as any of us three', the queen also stresses that she is not appealing to her masculine and martial qualities as an Amazon but the qualities that every woman has. Hippolyta should not fight the war on their behalf, she should only ask Theseus, her husband, if he would do so. Moreover, by kneeling to her husband on behalf of the widows, Hippolyta must physically show that she is subservient to him. Interestingly, the widows specifically ask Hippolyta to make use of her status as Theseus' wife because as her husband, Theseus 'is a servant for / The tenor of thy speech' (1.1.89-90). In contrast to the petitions of women in the later sixteenth century that took place in the public sphere and therefore required them to justify their intrusion into the masculine dominated space (Thorne 137), Hippolyta's petitioning will

only be successful if she remains within the private sphere of domesticity and her role as wife. Hippolyta's situation thus reveals the restrictions on fellow-feeling that occur through its use as a specifically feminine force.

Furthermore, Hippolyta inadvertently emphasises the feminine nature of fellow-feeling by showing that she is less receptive to it due to her experience of war. She tells Pirithous that she cannot be moved by fellow-feeling due to her military history:

> We have been soldiers, and we cannot weep
> When our friends don their helms, or put to sea,
> Or tell of babes broached on the lance, or women
> That have sod their infants in - and after ate them-
> The brine they wept at killing 'em. (1.3.18-22)

Hippolyta depicts a scenario vivid in its brutality, that of women eating their own babies, a far more gruesome image than the widows employ of Theseus lying dead on the battlefield. Hippolyta, and the rest of the Amazons, have already been exposed to so many horrors that they can no longer be moved by them. Instead, Hippolyta agrees to the widows' request out of a concern for her reputation, as is made clear when she says that if she does not, 'I should pluck / All ladies' scandals on me' (1.1.191-92). Hippolyta's reaction, in contrast to Emilia's, also shows us the less altruistic side to the idea of collaboration where one agrees to collude for fear of negative repercussions otherwise. Hippolyta thus acts as a foil to Emilia both in terms of her inability to be moved by fellow-feeling and in her defiance of gender norms.

The widows' petition, with the help of Emilia and Hippolyta, is successful, unlike Miranda's in *The Tempest*. Theseus agrees to postpone his wedding to help them. This first scene therefore demonstrates fellow-feeling's effectiveness as a collaborative force as well as illuminating underlying problems that are brought out as the play continues.

3.2 Palamon and Arcite as 'Citizen Couple'

The playwrights' consideration of collaboration in the play also extends to its portrayal of *amicitia*. *The Two Noble Kinsmen* emphasises that Palamon and Arcite's friendship functions most effectively in a collaborative fashion within public, civic settings when they are contributing to the commonwealth. Although the focus in Chaucer's *The Knight's Tale* in terms of Arcite and Palamon's relationship is more on the chivalric oath of brotherhood, as soon as we are introduced to Arcite and Palamon in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, Shakespeare and Fletcher frame their relationship as one of *amicitia* by having Arcite address Palamon as being 'dearer in love than blood' (1.2.1). Moreover, both Arcite himself, and later in the play, Theseus, refer to the fates of both as intertwined and as if one could not possibly live without the other, a feature that would suggest that their relationship is one of *amicitia*.[117]

In many ways, the early modern ideal of *amicitia* opposes the idea of fellow-feeling as a public and civic act because early modern writers and thinkers often portrayed the friendship pair as private and isolated from the world around them.[118] We witness this, for example, in Sir Thomas Elyot's telling of the well-known tale of friendship between Titus and Gisippus in *The Boke Named Governour*.[119] Titus and Gisippus prize their friendship with one another above all else, to such an extent that they are willing to sacrifice the woman they love and their own lives for one another. Although their friendship is political in the sense that it allows them to develop their virtuous qualities, it also prevents them from participating more directly in political life.

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[117] See Stewart for the argument that the relationship between the two is better considered one of kinship rather than friendship.

[118] See Shannon, Introduction.

[119] See Hutson *Usurer's* 57-64 for a discussion of the influence of Elyot's telling of the Titus and Gisippus story on early modern conceptions of *amicitia,* particularly in regards to friendship and instrumentality.

Before Titus reveals to their fellow nobility that he has married Sophronia, Gisippus' intended bride, instead of Gissipus marrying her himself, he justifies his actions by describing the strength of his friendship with Gisippus. He tells them, that after his father died, his friends and family in Rome were desperate for him to return and to take up a political posting there but he refused because:

> But all this coulde nat remove me the breadthe of my naylle frome my dere frende Gysippus. And but by force coulde nat I, nor yet may be drawen from his swete company, but yf he therto wylle consente. I choosynge rather to lyve with hym, as his companyon and felowe, ye and as his servant, rather than to be consull of Rome. (Sig.S6^{r})

Titus prizes Gisippus' friendship above all else and here places his relationship with him as his 'felowe' and 'servant' in direct opposition with the opportunity to be a consul in Rome. Just as friendship wins out over love throughout the tale, so too does it win out over any sense of political obligation. As Titus depicts it here, there is not even any sense of competition between the two: his friendship with Gisippus wins without any consideration of the alternative because to remove even 'the breadthe of my naylle' from Gisippus would be too painful. Friendship as Elyot portrays in the story of Titus and Gisippus can therefore be seen as an obstacle to politics rather than inherently political.

Montaigne too depicts a similar view of friendship in his well-known essay 'On Friendship' where he discusses his friendship with Etienne de la Boetie. In the course of his essay, he discusses the case of Caius Blosius who is interrogated by Roman consuls about his friendship with Tiberius Gracchus. One of the counsels asks Blosius if he would obey Gracchus if he asked him to set one of the temples on fire. Blosius replies that he would, upon which Montaigne comments:

> They were more Friends, than Citizens, and more Friends to one another, than either Friends or Enemies to their Country, or than Friends to Ambition and Innovation. Having absolutely given up themselves to one another, either held absolutely the reins of the others Inclination, which also they govern'd by Vertue, and guided by the conduct of Reason, (which also without these, it had not been possible to do,) and therefore *Blosius* his Answer was such as it ought to be. If either of their Actions flew out of the handle, they were neither (according to my measure of Friendship,) Friends to one another; nor to themselves. (Sig.V4^{v})

Montaigne makes it clear that Blosius and Gracchus prioritise the duties of their friendship over the duties of citizenship or indeed any other duty to their country, as they should according to the 'measure of Friendship'. In response to this passage, however, Jacques Derrida, in his *Politics of Friendship*, critiques this idea of friendship for prioritising the private over the public and comments that:

> Reason and virtue could never be *private*. They cannot enter into conflict with the public realm. These concepts of virtue and reason are brought to bear in advance on the space of the *res publica*. In such a tradition, a virtuous reason or a rational virtue that would not be in essence homogenous to the best reason of state is unthinkable. All the couples of friends which serve as examples for Cicero and Montaigne are citizen couples. These citizens are men whose *virile virtue* naturally tends, however successful or unsuccessful the attempt, to the harmonization of the measure of friendship – unconditional union or affection – with the equally imperative reason of state. (184)

Despite Montaigne's 'dream of a fundamental apoliticism or transpoliticism' (184), Derrida argues that friendship coalesces with the public sphere because, for citizens, the public and the private inevitably interact. A friendship pair must also therefore be a 'citizen couple' because their behaviour, virtuous or not, inevitably impacts on public concerns of the state as well as their own private concerns. This argument forms part of Derrida's wider attempt to show that friendship should, in fact, be applied beyond the pair. For Derrida,

therefore, friendship is inherently political, no matter whether it occurs only between two men or more. We have already seen above, in Le Roy's commentary on Aristotle's *Politics*, that early modern writers too were aware of the political implications of friendship.[120]

In many ways, we can see Palamon and Arcite's relationship as exemplifying Derrida's concept of the 'citizen couple' due to the fact that their behaviour as a friendship pair impacts upon the political health of the commonwealth more widely. Palamon and Arcite take their duty to Thebes very seriously, meaning that, in their case, they act as a highly virtuous citizen couple. Shakespeare and Fletcher frame Palamon and Arcite's friendship within the chivalric context of war, and within this context it is quite successful. In the first conversation that takes places between the pair, the playwrights depict them as facing a choice between self-preservation and duty. Echoing the tone of the previous scene, the scene begins with a plea of sorts, when Arcite asks Palamon if they can leave the city before they 'further / Sully our gloss of youth' (1.2.4-5). No sooner have the pair decided to leave Creon's court than Valerius arrives to inform them that Creon is calling them to arms for his war with Theseus. Although unafraid of fighting, Arcite worries that they will only achieve a fraction of what they are capable of because they do not believe in fighting for Creon's cause. In response, Palamon instructs him:

> Leave that unreasoned.
> Our services stand now for Thebes, not Creon;
> Yet to be neutral to him were dishonour,
> Rebellious to oppose. Therefore we must
> With him stand to the mercy of our fate,
> Who hath bounded our last minute. (1.2.98-103)

[120] See above 205.

By claiming that their services 'stand now for Thebes, not Creon', Palamon highlights that, despite their agreement that Creon is 'a most unbounded tyrant' (1.2.63), they still have a duty to Thebes itself and therefore their duty is to consider the good of the commonwealth as a whole. Given the chivalric context of the play, the best way in which Arcite and Palamon can display their virtue is to fight on Thebes' behalf. In agreeing to go to war, they therefore prioritise their sense of duty over their desire for self-preservation, emphasising their willingness to sacrifice themselves for the sake of the commonwealth. Their status as a virtuous citizen couple is also reflected in the reverence in which they are held for their skills on the battlefield. Theseus describes to the herald how he watched them in battle:

> Like to a pair of lions, smeared with prey,
> Make lanes in troops aghast. I fixed my note
> Constantly on them, for they were a mark
> Worth a god's view. (1.4.18-21)

In his admiration of Arcite's and Palamon's martial success, Theseus depicts them as achieving the ultimate chivalric ideal of being fearsome warriors 'worth a god's view', continuing to comment that 'their lives concern us / Much more than Thebes is worth' (1.4.32-33). As a virtuous citizen couple therefore, Arcite and Palamon are highly successful, both in terms of their friendship with each other, and in their contribution to the commonwealth.

Once Palamon and Arcite are arrested, however, and enclosed within the 'holy sanctuary' of the prison, their friendship must adapt to the new isolated setting where no contact with the outside world is possible. When we first see them in the prison, Palamon laments the loss of their status as a citizen couple. He asks 'Where is Thebes now? Where is our noble country?' reminiscing that:

> Palamon and Arcite,
> Even in the wagging of a wanton leg,

> Outstripped the people's praises, won the garlands,
> Ere they have time to wish 'em ours. Oh, never
> Shall we two exercise, like twins of honor,
> Our arms again and feel our fiery horses
> Like proud seas under us. (2.2.14-20)

Palamon's lamenting after Thebes and their 'noble country' recalls his concern that 'our services stand now for Thebes, not Creon'. Within the speech he continues to portray himself and Arcite as the epitome of the virtuous citizen couple, more than able to far exceed the people's expectations. By speaking of himself and Arcite in the third person, Palamon shows them from 'the people's' point of view, emphasising that they derive their sense of worth, virtue and purpose from 'the people's praises' and their reputation as 'twins of honour', rather than from each other's company alone.

In prison, however, all they have is one another's company. Arcite highlights the extent of their isolation while in prison when he tells Palamon: 'This is all our world / We shall know nothing here but one another' (2.2.40-41). For writers like Montaigne, the 'holy sanctuary' of the prison acts as an appropriate metaphor for the ideal of *amicitia* itself, where friendship acts as an imaginative construct allowing the friendship pair to exist in a sphere all of their own. In order to 'make worthy uses' (2.2.69) of their time in prison, Arcite suggests that they consciously embrace this ideal of *amicitia*:

> Let's think this prison holy sanctuary,
> To keep us from the corruption of worse men.
> We are young and yet desire the ways of honour,
> That liberty and common conversation,
> The poison of pure spirits, might - like women -
> Woo us to wander from. What worthy blessing
> Can be, but our imaginations
> May make it ours? And here being thus together,
> We are an endless mine to one another;
> We are one another's wife, ever begetting

> New births of love; we are father, friends, acquaintance;
> We are, in one another, families;
> I am your heir and you are mine . . .
> Were we at liberty,
> A wife might part us lawfully, or business;
> Quarrels consume us; envy of ill men
> Crave our acquaintance . . .
> A thousand chances,
> Were we from hence, would sever us. (2.2.71-95)

Arcite's speech signals a transition from conceiving their friendship as a citizen couple to thinking about their friendship as a private and isolated affair that the 'holy sanctuary' of the prison allows. Arcite begins by speaking of more general obstacles to their development of honour and virtue that 'liberty and common conversation' might create. His statement of prison as a place 'to keep us from the corruption of worse men' echoes his concern while in Thebes that they would be tainted by the surrounding corruption. At this point, therefore, he is still conceptualising their friendship in relation to the public sphere. However, his question 'what worthy blessing / Can be but our imaginations / May make it ours?' marks an important conceptual shift in his thinking. It shows a deliberate move from the active, embodied existence as a citizen couple that Palamon previously describes when he speaks of them as exercising their arms and feeling 'our fiery horses / Like proud seas under us' to the imaginative ideal of *amicitia* as a 'holy sanctuary'. From that point onwards, Arcite speaks of obstacles to their friendship specifically which 'would sever us', rather than their honour in general, such as a wife or the 'envy of ill men', setting up the prison as a perfect environment in which the ideal of *amicitia* can thrive. In this speech, Arcite views the prison walls as literalising the walls that separate them as a friendship pair from everyone else. Ironically, in Palamon and Arcite's case, not even the prison walls are enough

to secure their friendship as unimpeachable: the window allows in enough outside influence to cause their downfall.

Palamon and Arcite not only embrace the ideal of *amicitia* as a 'holy sanctuary' but stretch it to such an extent as to test it to its limits. Moments prior to Arcite's speech above, Palamon remarks that they are 'two souls / Put in two noble bodies' which will 'grow together' through suffering 'the gall of hazard' (2.2.64-66). Shakespeare and Fletcher could not more overtly signal to their audience that this is not a form of *amicitia* with 'one soul in two bodies'. Rather, although throughout their time as a citizen couple the fortunes of Arcite and Palamon have been 'twined together' (2.2.64), their souls remain separate from one another, as the playwrights already hint at in the opening conversation between the pair where Palamon misunderstands Arcite's line of thought. He thinks that Arcite is speaking only about the ill treatment of soldiers in Thebes, rather than, as Arcite intends, the pervasive corruption 'where every evil / Hath a good colour' (1.2.38-39). Realising that they are speaking at cross-purposes, Arcite declares 'Tis not this / I did begin to speak of' (1.2.34-5). Palamon's failure to immediately grasp Arcite's meaning reveals that the sense of likeness cited both by Cicero and by early modern writers as necessary for the ideal of *amicitia* is not necessary for Arcite and Palamon's effectiveness as a citizen couple. Instead of being 'one soul in two bodies', they are 'twins of honor' (2.2.18) as Palamon describes them when they first enter the prison.

Once in prison, however, and uprooted from the rest of their community and the 'view of the people', their friendship buckles almost immediately, unable to be sustained when one has only the other. In describing themselves as 'an endless mine to one another' and as 'one another's wife', Arcite attempts to replace all social bonds with just one: his friendship with Palamon. The ideal of *amicitia* implodes under this strain, especially given that newly conceived

as the imagined ideal of *amicitia*, Palamon and Arcite's friendship does not have the same strong foundation as Pirithous and Theseus' does whose 'knot of love / tied, weaved, entangled, with so true, so long, / And with a finger of so deep a cunning, / May be outworn, never undone' (1.3.41-44). Without this strong foundation their friendship crumbles as soon as they see the possibility for another bond to supplement their friendship with, in the form of Emilia. Laurie Shannon in her chapter on *The Two Noble Kinsmen* in *Sovereign Amity* rightly points out that 'the case of Palamon and Arcite . . . deviates so markedly from Theseus and Pirithous's model friendship that it must be considered a parody of the highly-rhetoricized period ideal' (103). We can add to this that the playwrights also use the example of Palamon and Arcite's friendship to show the limits of the ideal specifically within the context of isolation and as an imagined ideal cut off from all forms of reality.

The contrast between imagination and reality is furthered within the scene itself by the juxtaposition of the rapid implosion of Arcite and Palamon's friendship with the carefree and easy camaraderie created between Emilia and one of her maids as they wander in the garden together. Richard Abrams and Laurie Shannon have written about how we can read the interaction between Emilia and her maid as one of female eroticism. In this, their relationship reflects Arcite and Palamon's friendship which also contains hints of homoeroticism (McMullan, 'A Rose' 136). Yet in opposition to Palamon and Arcite's friendship, the scene shows Emilia and her maid's friendship as a lived reality, anchored within the materiality of objects and in the pleasures taken in the garden, as opposed to the imaginative ideal that Arcite and Palamon briefly attempt to live out in their 'holy sanctuary'. The discussion between Emilia and her maid is based on the flowers they come across in the garden, first narcissus and then roses before they depart with the flowers in

hand. That their friendship is embedded within the lived reality of their surroundings, as Arcite and Palamon's friendship was before they went to prison, emphasises that the complete isolation both from other people and the outside world causes the breakdown of Arcite and Palamon's formerly successful friendship in a public and civic setting.

The play's depiction of Arcite and Palamon's friendship therefore reveals that, even in friendship relationships as opposed to fellow-feeling, interaction with others and with the civic sphere is required for them to be fully successful.

3.3 The Collaboration of Fellow-Feeling and Friendship

The second petition scene that occurs in the play is the very opposite of the prison scene in that many social ties must join together in order for it to be successful. It is thus even more collaborative than *The Two Noble Kinsmen*'s opening scene or *The Tempest*'s final scene in which Prospero's fellow-feeling must first be prompted by Ariel's, due to the fact that the power of fellow-feeling and *amicitia* must work together.

Moreover, the second petition scene demonstrates the success of Shakespeare and Fletcher's own collaboration.[121] Shakespeare and Fletcher's status as co-authors and the authorship attribution of each scene in the play has by now been well established due to the work of many generations of scholars.[122] In scholarship on early modern collaborative plays, one of the questions which frequently arises is that of thematic unity. Cyrus Hoy states the question concisely: 'to what extent does the fact of multiple authorship impede the achievement of some degree of formal unity—some quality of thematic

[121] See Masten 37-63 who argues that, on the contrary, the play's depiction of the tension between friendship and marriage forms a possible critique of the collaborative practice.
[122] See Vickers who traces the scholarship on authorship attribution from Henry Weber's 1812 edition of *The Works of Beaumont and Fletcher* onwards.

design—for the play as a whole?' (5-6, qtd. in Vickers 440). Scholars have detected problems in terms of plot inconsistences and discrepancies in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* which they accredit to its multiple authorship (Potter 30). As Potter notes, however, 'these problems are easily solved, or not noticed, in the theatre' (30). Moreover, as we see in the play's treatment of fellow-feeling, the inconsistencies at the level of plot do not mean to say that the play does not provide a unified thematic approach.

The ideas of fellow-feeling and of the citizen couple are both introduced in the first act, the whole of which is attributed to Shakespeare. The subsequent development of these ideas occurs in scenes attributed to Fletcher, in Act 2, Scene 2 and in the second petition scene, Act 3, Scene 6. In both these scenes, Fletcher refers back to ideas and patterns Shakespeare introduces.[123] In Act 2, Scene 2, Palamon's description of himself and Arcite as 'twins of honour' on the battlefield develops Shakespeare's portrayal of the pair as a 'citizen couple', fighting on behalf of their commonwealth. Fletcher then sets up this idea of a more public, political friendship against a more private, isolated type of *amicitia* and does so, as many critics have remarked, in his characteristic style (Potter 26). Similarly, in Act 3 Scene 6, the second petition scene, Fletcher follows the same pattern that Shakespeare introduces with several characters kneeling to Theseus to ask him to grant their petition but goes on to modify and complicate this model. Thus, while maintaining the character of their own writing, the playwrights also work together to develop the themes of the play in thought-provoking ways and in such a manner as to fashion the play as a cohesive unit, demonstrating a successful act of collaboration.

[123] Lois Potter, in her introduction to her edition of *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, writes that 'In 1.4, 2.2, possibly 2.5, and 5.1, he [Fletcher] seems to have been working on, or in light of the Shakespearean material' (36). I would also add 3.6 to this list.

Although the second petition scene follows the same pattern as the first one with several supplicants kneeling to Theseus, its dynamics are very different. Theseus, Hippolyta, Emilia and Pirithous come across Palamon and Arcite duelling in a glade. Theseus immediately denounces them as 'mad malicious traitors' (3.6.132) and commands 'both shall die!' (3.6.136). Arcite and Palamon proclaim themselves happy to die but Hippolyta prompts Emilia:

> Now or never, sister,
> Speak not to be denied. That face of yours
> Will bear the curses else of after ages
> For those lost cousins. (3.6.185-88)

If, in the earlier petition scene, Hippolyta's reputation was at risk, now she claims that Emilia's is. Hence Emilia must speak up for her own sake, rather than for Palamon's and Arcite's. However, Emilia herself makes it clear in her response that she does not agree with Hippolyta's reasoning:

> In my face, dear sister,
> I find no anger to 'em, nor no ruin;
> The misadventure of their own eyes kill 'em.
> Yet that I will be a woman and have pity,
> My knees shall grow to th'ground but I'll get mercy.
> Help me, dear sister; in a deed so virtuous,
> The powers of all women will be with us. (3.6.188-194)

Emilia locates the blame for Palamon and Arcite's imminent deaths firmly in 'the misadventure of their own eyes', refusing to accept that her face as a passive object holds any responsibility. That she nevertheless pleads on their behalf, despite the fact that they are willing to die, is therefore a demonstration of true fellow-feeling rather than concern for her own reputation and an act that will cost Emilia dearly. Emilia proceeds to give the most explicit formulation in the play thus far of fellow-feeling as a quality inherent within all women and as an act of fellowship that binds all women together. She is

willing to 'have pity' because she wants to show that 'I will be a woman' and refuses to give in until she receives mercy. She claims in carrying out such a deed 'the powers of all women will be with us', stressing the collective nature of the enterprise and the loyalty of women between one another. In emphasising the virtuous nature of the women's deed, Emilia's formulation of fellow-feeling is reminiscent of *amicitia* and its focus on virtue. The virtue about which Emilia speaks, however, is not individual but collective. This collective virtue, generated and approved by 'the powers of all women' contrasts with the conspicuous lack of loyalty and virtue now present in Palamon and Arcite's interactions. When Theseus comes upon them in the glade, Palamon betrays Arcite by revealing his identity, symbolising the ultimate destruction of their friendship.

This time, however, Hippolyta's and Emilia's pleas alone are not enough to succeed in persuading Theseus to listen to their wishes and Pirithous too must join in. Pirithous makes use of his friendship with Theseus by employing it as the basis of his petition: 'by all our friendship, sir; by all our dangers; / By all you love most - wars and this sweet lady' (3.6.202-203). Pirithous therefore puts his friendship with Theseus to a public use. Noticeably, Hippolyta and Emilia do not ask him to aid them, he does so voluntarily. This second petition scene also differs from the first in that this time women are not pleading on behalf of women but on behalf of a (former) friendship pair whom Theseus has branded as traitors. Pirithous therefore recognises that in this case fellow-feeling will not be enough, the forces of fellow-feeling and *amicitia* will have to combine in order to be successful. Pirithous joins with Hippolyta and Emilia to release a barrage of pleas to Theseus, each interrupting with their plea before the previous one can finish, creating an accumulative vocal cacophony of the various obligations that Theseus owes to all of them. Unsurprisingly,

Theseus finds himself overwhelmed, exclaiming 'ye make my faith reel' (3.6.212). As such, this scene forms a contrasting counterpart to the implosion of Palamon and Arcite's friendship that we see in the jail scene. Many social ties combine – Theseus' relationship with Emilia as 'most royal brother' (3.6.194), his 'tie of marriage' (3.6.195) with Hippolyta and his friendship with Pirithous – amassing a growing impact of all these obligations together, as opposed to Arcite and Palamon's attempt to replace all social bonds with one another.

We must take a closer look, however, at what the success of the petition entails for Emilia, the key advocate of fellow-feeling. Had Arcite and Palamon been put to death, as Theseus intended before Emilia's intervention, she would have been able to remain unmarried, at least for a time. As a direct result of her actions, however, Emilia is forced into marrying one of them against her own desires. This occurrence highlights the irony of the fact that, in both *The Two Noble Kinsmen* and *The Tempest*, the act of fellow-feeling results in Emilia and Miranda advocating, or literally giving their voices to, others, when they struggle to have their own voices heard. This irony is particularly striking in Act 3 Scene 6 of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* when Emilia, with the help of Hippolyta and Pirithous, is able to make Theseus listen to her pleas on Arcite's and Palamon's behalf, but not her own. After having declared that their petitions have caused him to question his decision, Theseus asks his petitioners 'Say I felt / compassion to 'em both, how would you place it? (3.6.212-13). Emilia responds 'Upon their lives. But with their banishments' (3.5.214). Theseus replies:

> You are a right woman, sister; you have pity
> But want the understanding where to use it.
> If you desire their lives, invent a way
> Safer than banishment. (3.6.215-18)

Theseus describes Emilia as a 'right woman' in a highly derogatory sense for having pity but lacking the knowledge of how to use it, undermining the power of fellow-feeling and the 'power of all woman' that Emilia earlier expressed. Emilia must therefore proceed by appealing to a more personal tie she has with Theseus, by reminding him of his oath 'that you would ne'er deny me anything / Fit for my modest suit and your free granting' (3.6.234-35). Pirthous voices his continuing support by encouraging her to 'urge it home, brave lady' (2.6.233). Although she earlier dismissed Hippolyta's claim that she would be blamed for the cousins' deaths, Emilia appeals to Theseus for the sake of her reputation when she says:

> O Duke Theseus,
> The goodly mothers that have groaned for these
> And all the longing maids that ever loved,
> If your vow stand, shall curse me and my beauty
> And in their funeral songs for these two cousins
> Despise my cruelty and cry woe worth me,
> Till I am nothing but the scorn of women. (3.6.244-250)

Though she is now thinking of her own reputation, rather than of Palamon and Arcite, Emilia nevertheless returns to 'the powers of all women' in this speech, by thinking of the impact of the cousins' deaths on their 'goodly mothers' and on 'longing maids'. To become the 'scorn of women' is the worst fate Emilia can imagine for herself emphasising her need to exist within the female community. Ironically, Emilia's plea for Theseus' compassion completely backfires as it causes him to prioritise Arcite's and Palamon's interests over her own. Arcite and Palamon obstinately refuse to forget they love Emilia, as Emilia would have them do, thus ignoring Emilia's own feelings as they have done throughout the play. Theseus, however, does not want to return to his original plan of putting them to death 'for now I feel compassion' (3.6.271). Pirithous again intervenes urging, 'let it not fall again,

sir' (3.6.272). Theseus comes up with an alternate plan, asking Emilia: 'Say, Emilia, / If one of them were dead, as one must, are you / Content to take th'other to your husband?' (3.6.272-74). Although we hear Palamon and Arcite's verbal agreement, Emilia herself remains conspicuously silent. Emilia therefore manages to negotiate an improved situation for Palamon and for Arcite but, in the process, she makes her own much worse. Given her concern for her place in the female community that we have just witnessed and her request for Arcite and Palamon to be banished, we cannot imagine that such a solution is one Emilia would find desirable. In some senses, Shakespeare and Fletcher mitigate the harshness of the ending in comparison to Chaucer. While Chaucer's Emeyle sticks firmly to her vow of chastity in her prayer to Diana, Emilia begins to waver from hers. Nevertheless, at the end of the play we are left with the sense that Emilia has had to pay a high price for her willingness to embrace fellow-feeling.

The Two Noble Kinsmen therefore significantly develops many of the aspects of fellow-feeling we have explored with regards to *The Tempest*. The opening scene emphasises the collaborative nature of fellow-feeling in the play, and the second petition scene further strengthens this idea by highlighting the need for both fellow-feeling and friendship to work together. However, the second petition scene in particular also illustrates that, though fellow-feeling may function as a bond to link political subjects to one another, it does not allow for equal representation. We see this clearly in the irony that Emilia is the strongest conduit of fellow-feeling in the play but the recipient of none.

Both *The Tempest* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* thus engage with many of the themes we have explored throughout this thesis: they highlight, for example, the significance of the ethical side of politics and investigate the relationship between subjects and rulers, as well as examining the role of women within

the political community. Shakespeare's concern with community therefore runs throughout his comedies, whether they be 'romantic comedies', 'problem plays' or 'late plays'. To conclude this thesis, I will reflect on the wider implications of my investigation of Shakespeare's politics of community.

Conclusion: Evaluating the View from the Community

By reading the politics of community in Shakespeare's comedies, I hope to have demonstrated that the politics of the comedies are as worthy of serious consideration as those of the tragedies and histories. Conceiving of politics as grounded within the processes of civic engagement and everyday life within a community, I depart from the elite male-dominated sense of politics that often prevails in readings of Shakespeare's politics. Returning to the words of Diomedes that we considered in the Introduction, this thesis has shown that 'unimportant, private persons' contribute equally to the political community with 'leaders of state, kings' (qtd. in and trans. Cunningham 43).

Moreover, throughout this thesis I have emphasised the inseparability of politics and ethics, both in terms of relationships between subjects and between subjects and rulers. I have also demonstrated that, despite the well-documented turn in the late sixteenth century towards a Tacitean mode of thinking, Shakespeare remains attuned to a Ciceronian and Aristotelian mode of thought. Finally, my exploration of Shakespeare's politics of community has raised questions about the form and coherence of the comedies, as well as highlighting the way in which Shakespeare uses dramatic qualities specific to the genre to contribute to early modern political discourse. This conclusion will therefore reflect on and interrogate these outcomes, as well as considering areas for future study.

1. Reorienting the Political

In the course of this thesis, my emphasis on civic engagement and the processes of everyday life within a community has brought into focus the contributions of ordinary community members rather than only those of the monarchy and aristocracy whose viewpoint is often privileged in political

readings of Shakespeare's work, even in those of the comedies as well as of the tragedies and histories.[124] In this thesis, however, we have witnessed throughout the comedies the significant role played by ordinary community members, from Adriana in *The Comedy of Errors* to Barnardine in *Measure for Measure*. Adriana displays a far greater sense of civic virtue than her husband, for example, by showing an awareness of the significance of the relationship between the household and the community. In contrast to Adriana, Barnardine does not display civic virtue but, by refusing to heed commands for his execution, he highlights the agency that can be claimed by individuals.

In particular, my readings of the comedies emphasise the significant contributions made by women to their political communities, whether that be in terms of their role within the household or the duties they undertake outside of it. In *The Comedy of Errors,* Antipholus of Ephesus almost destroys his social and financial credit by failing to value Adriana's domestic efforts. In *The Tempest*, meanwhile, Miranda reveals a capacity for political agency that Prospero has to work to contain. In both *The Merchant of Venice* and *Measure for Measure*, women play pivotal roles in restoring a sense of justice to the political community. In *The Merchant of Venice*, Portia uses her legal and rhetorical talent to negate the threat Shylock poses to the Venetian community. Isabella, in *Measure for Measure*, refuses to give in to Angelo's demands even though she could save her brother's life by doing so and plays a key role in bringing Angelo's crimes into the public sphere in which justice can be procured.

We might note, however, that Portia's agency as a female is restricted. Portia is only able to act as a lawyer through her male disguise. Moreover, in *The*

[124] This is especially true of work written in the New Historicist tradition. See, for example, Montrose's discussion of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in '"Shaping Fantasies": Figurations of Gender and Power in Elizabethan Culture' and R. Wilson.

Merchant of Venice, the question of justice is a contentious one: Portia's actions are as likely to be seen as unjust as just. Nevertheless, she manages to bring the conflict of the play to a resolution in a way that the Duke of Venice is unable to.

Isabella's experience, meanwhile, illustrates that women can attain more political power by working together. While Isabella depends on Mariana's help in order to succeed with the bed-trick, Mariana's attempt to persuade the Duke to rescind Angelo's death sentence depends on her ability to convince Isabella to join in with her plea. *The Two Noble Kinsmen* also highlights the strength of female collective political power: the widows' ability to enlist Theseus to their cause rests on their ability to first receive Emilia's and Hippolyta's support. Although the play's depiction of female collective political power becomes more complicated as the action proceeds, it nevertheless highlights what can be achieved when community members work together.

Servants too are often afforded key political importance in the comedies. The Dromios in *The Comedy of Errors* play a highly necessary role in the action of the play, passing key messages between the characters and acting as buffers for the frustrations of other characters when things go wrong. Ariel in *The Tempest* plays an even more significant role in facilitating Prospero's display of fellow-feeling which is necessary to order to initiate a sense of reconciliation and end the play.

Thus in the plays we have explored, Shakespeare participates in contemporary debates about the nature of citizenship as well as the role of the household, demonstrating the need for every community member to actively participate, whether traditionally considered to be a citizen or not, as well as revaluating what it means to display civic virtue.

2. The Ethical and the Political

The relationships between subjects I have investigated in this thesis are often ethical ones, emphasising the need to maintain trust, consent or fellow-feeling. One of the consequences of the ethical side of politics is that ethical principles established by the community can often play a bigger role in regulating it than the ruler does. We see this particularly in *The Comedy of Errors* where the Duke of Ephesus does not play a large part in regulating the Ephesian community, due to the emphasis on trust. Similarly, we do not see the Duke of Venice in *The Merchant of Venice* undertaking many governmental decisions. In *Merchant*, however, although the ethical principle of trust also plays a prominent role in the community, it is far less effective due to the fact that there is no consensus among members on how it should function. While the Christian merchants believe in the need to trust and be trusted, Shylock and the other Jews negate the need for trust through their practice of usury. In both *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Merchant of Venice*, the Dukes are called into action in moments of crisis. However, neither are able to effectively solve the dilemmas for which their subjects seek their help. Instead, Aemilia's appearance at the end of *The Comedy of Errors* is what allows the confusions of the play to be solved while, as noted above, in *The Merchant of Venice* Portia's intellect is required to resolve the court case. While the problems of *The Comedy of Errors* are resolved through the reestablishment of trust, in *Merchant* they can only be solved by the application of the law, which acts as an entity entirely separate from the Duke's rule, unlike in *Measure for Measure*.

In *Measure for Measure, The Tempest* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen,* the idea of the community as self-governing becomes more complicated because the rulers take on a more active role. In fact in criticism of *Measure for Measure* and *The Tempest*, critics have often viewed Duke Vincentio and Prospero as equivalent

to absolute rulers, exerting the highest possible authority over their subjects and, in Prospero's case, his daughter.[125] In my readings of all three of these plays, however, I have shown that neither Vincentio, Prospero nor Theseus are able to completely disregard the wishes of their subjects. Although we cannot call these communities self-governing as such, Shakespeare emphasises that the rulers require the cooperation of their subjects in order to be able to form a successful and harmonious commonwealth.

Correspondingly, a further consequence of the relationship between the ethical and the political in these plays is the way in which the behaviour of subjects is able to influence and impact upon their rulers. In *Measure for Measure*, Isabella's embracing of a sense of reciprocity between her and Mariana in turn encourages the Duke to rethink his proposal to Isabella using a similar emphasis on mutuality. In both *The Tempest* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, furthermore, Prospero's and Theseus' actions as leaders are eventually shaped by the examples of their subjects who demonstrate to them the power of fellow-feeling. The capacity of subjects to motivate a change in their rulers' behaviour indicates that in a political community the contributions of each member is significant, no matter their status as subject or ruler.

3. Politics and Drama

This thesis has argued that Shakespeare explores political ideas in his plays through specific literary and dramatic means rather than through sustained exposition in the manner of political tracts. As Jean Howard writes, it is important 'when thinking of Shakespeare's contribution to political thought, to consider not only the ideas debated in his plays, but also the particular

[125] For Vincentio as absolute ruler see above, 150 n.81. For Prospero, particularly in the context of his role as father, see Adelman, F. Dolan 'Subordinate' and Moncrief.

vividness with which the stage brought them home to the ordinary people who frequented the theatre' ('Dramatic' 143). This thesis claims that comedy as a genre is particularly able to bring political ideas to life on stage in a way that will resonate with the audience because, unlike the histories and many of the tragedies, they are set in the present and thereby offer a space in which to experiment with alternative realities.

Of all Shakespeare's comedies, *Measure for Measure* is the play most often read by critics as if 'it were an intellectual treatise in dramatic form' (Bawcutt 43). Indeed, the Duke's opening speech gestures at such a reading when the Duke first claims he will 'of government the properties unfold' (1.1.3) but then fails to give any further explanation of the properties of government. The Duke's introduction and subsequent negation of this idea indicates that any attempt to read *Measure for Measure* as an 'intellectual treatise in dramatic form' must inevitably founder on the play's inconsistencies. Rather, is it through vivid dramatic scenes, that often work in point and counterpoint with one another, that we are led to appreciate what the play wishes to tell us. The use of recurring motifs such as substitution and the dramatic technique of the bed-trick allows the audience to draw out connections between sexual and political consent that would otherwise not have been elucidated. Moreover, the play's final scene, in which the Duke fails to override the voices of his citizens, neatly encapsulates the ability of drama to encourage multi-vocality.

The other comedies we have looked at in this thesis also use specific dramatic techniques to demonstrate political implications. In *The Comedy of Errors*, Shakespeare's decision to make the scene in which Antipholus of Ephesus is locked out of his house a climactic one makes concrete the effects of Antipholus' failure to be a good husband. The visual separation of the household and the marketplace on the stage is also important for the play's

exploration of the relationship between the two and for helping to create the impact of the locked-out scene. Similarly, the movement between Venice and Belmont in *The Merchant of Venice* works to structure the play in such a way that brings the audience's attention to the dichotomy being set up between a society founded on mercantilism and a society founded on the household. In *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, the deliberate echoes which Shakespeare and Fletcher create between the two petitioning scenes serve to highlight the power of fellow-feeling throughout the play and Emilia's and the widows' role in creating it.

Both *The Merchant of Venice* and *The Tempest* especially showcase the ambiguity that dramatic texts allow for. Key moments in both plays are fundamentally ambiguous. Shylock's claim that he 'would be friends' with Antonio 'and have your love' (1.3.131) is vital to many readings of the play but interpretation can vary drastically based on performance choices. The speech can be performed either as genuine or as entirely insincere. If genuine, then Shylock is sincerely seeking to be accepted into the Venetian Christian community and Antonio's rejection of his attempt at friendship denies this acceptance. If performed as insincere, however, Shylock shows no desire to join the Christian community. Whatever way we decide to read this speech has important implications for the way in which we interpret the play's central conflict. Similarly, one of the main cruxes of interpretation in *The Tempest* is the question of whether Caliban attempted to rape Miranda. Again, depending on the performance choices, Caliban can be portrayed on a spectrum ranging from as a victim unfairly vilified by Prospero and Miranda to as an aggressor unable to control his base impulses of desire and revenge, with significant implications for an audience's overall understanding of the play and Caliban's role within the island's community.

In all the plays explored, I have considered the relationship between Shakespeare's plays and their source texts and analogues, both dramatic and non-dramatic, to help us illuminate their political implications. Particularly in *The Comedy of Errors, Measure for Measure* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, Shakespeare's modifications to his source texts are instrumental in bringing his specific political concerns relating to trust, consent and fellow-feeling to the forefront. *The Merchant of Venice's* relationship to *The Jew of Malta* (1590) and Robert Wilson's *The Three Ladies of London* (1584) is also significant in revealing Shakespeare's handling of Elizabethan stereotypes of usurers and merchants. Comparisons with other dramatic texts are important not only for what they reveal about Shakespeare's thematic approach but also for what they reveal about his dramaturgy. Many of the dramatic techniques I have pointed to above, such as Shakespeare's staging of the division between the household and the marketplace in *The Comedy of Errors*, and the use of the bed trick in *Measure for Measure,* one of the earliest uses on the early modern stage, are Shakespeare's own innovations, not to be found in his dramatic source texts.

We have also observed the influence of Ciceronian and Aristotelian thought on Shakespeare's political thinking throughout this thesis. We see Cicero's influence most clearly in Shakespeare's presentation of ideas of civic virtue and the good citizen, while Aristotle's influence can be seen in his conception of the *polis* and the role of the household within that. Shakespeare, however, does not straightforwardly endorse the ideas he finds in Aristotle and Cicero. I have already highlighted above the ways in which he plays with the traditional notion of civic virtue. *The Merchant of Venice*, moreover, blurs the distinctions between Aristotle's descriptions of the liberal and prodigal man in *The Nicomachean Ethics* by bringing them to life on stage in the form of

Antonio and Shylock, as well as questioning Cicero's notion of honour in the *De Officiis*. In *The Tempest* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, Shakespeare works with the idea of civic friendship as described by both Aristotle and Cicero, in *The Nicomachean Ethics* and *De Amicitia* respectively, but profoundly alters it to fellow-feeling so that its application extends beyond citizens and encompasses all political subjects.

This thesis has focused exclusively on the work of Shakespeare. One direction for future study, therefore, is to extend consideration of the politics of community to other early modern playwrights. Janet Clare, in *Shakespeare's Stage Traffic* (2014), has shown the value of approaching early modern plays in light of the circulation and 'trafficking' of plays that occurred in the early modern theatrical context (1).[126] A comparative analysis that considers contemporary playwrights working in similar traditions would allow me to interrogate further the use of dramatic and theatrical techniques as well as recurring thematic motifs.

4. Genre

Widening my consideration of the politics of community to include other playwrights would also have implications for my consideration of genre. In contrast to the current critical trend of dividing the comedies into 'romances', 'problem plays' or 'festive comedies', this thesis has established the value of considering Shakespeare's comedies as a coherent whole which are all engaged in the same project of testing out the values which make or break communities. By reading *The Tempest* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* together, I have also challenged the viewpoint that *The Tempest* represents 'an opportunity to explore Shakespeare's final treatment of the subjects he so

[126] See also Wiggins; Walsh.

proactively probed in his earlier dramas' (Smith and Curtwright xi). Thinking about Shakespeare's plays alongside other early modern drama means that I could situate his work not only within his own chronology but also within the repertories of his playing companies, the Queen's Men and King's Men. Janet Clare notes that that it was not uncommon for early modern plays to be published anonymously with only the names of their playing companies on the title page (12). Therefore, as scholars working in the field of repertory studies have shown, it makes sense to consider early modern plays within the context of the company they were produced for because 'companies reacted to the plays performed alongside their own, with influences and sources bouncing back and forth between adult and children's companies alike' (Munro 165).[127] Gordon McMullan highlights that one of the consequences of this approach for a consideration of the Shakespearean canon is that the last plays are no longer seen as 'last' but 'they mark, rather, a major transition for the company, from the period in which Shakespeare was the principal house playwright to the period of Fletcher's dominance' ('What?', 24). Such an approach would therefore avoid the necessity to consider the demarcations of genre based on Shakespeare's stage in his career and rather facilitate an emphasis on early modern comedy as a category more broadly.

5. Shakespeare's Political Thinking

In terms of altering the critically received picture of Shakespeare's political thinking, my focus on the comedies has enabled me to challenge the image of the 'darkly sceptical Shakespeare' (Skinner, 'Afterword' 279) that emerges from analyses of the politics in the tragedies and histories. Instead I have been able to paint a far more optimistic picture of Shakespeare's politics not because the comedies 'end with the promise of fresh happiness' (Salinger 14)

[127] See also McMillan and MacLean; Gurr *The Shakespearian Companies*.

but because Shakespeare demonstrates in them what the political community is capable of and what it facilitates among its members. This is not to say that Shakespeare ignores issues or problems in the comedies. The communities of the plays we have looked at in this thesis grapple with problems of deceit, of religious and class difference, of exclusion and of justice. Rather, in working through and portraying these problems, he presents us with a view of the political community that is often empowering, sometimes contradictory, but usually suggestive of hope for the future, whether that hope lies in a renewed appreciation of the familial and the domestic as in *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Merchant of Venice*, the strength of collaboration in *Measure for Measure* and specifically female collaboration in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* or the forgiveness that is finally attained in *The Tempest* and Prospero's reluctant willingness to 'acknowledge' Caliban as part of the island's community.

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